Re:membrance of Absence

Disrupting perceptions of Jewish and minority identity in Ireland through theatre.

by

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Abstract

This research examines social, historical and theoretical reasons that have contributed to the noticeable omission of minority voices, specifically Jewish voices, from Irish theatre narratives to date. The creation of the play *Here Shall We Rest* (*HSWR*) was the practical culmination of this investigation. Testimonials from eight participants around their experience as either Irish-Jewish or Jewish and resident in Ireland form the foundational material for the play text of *HSWR*. The qualitative research methodology employed here combines elements of ethnography and auto-ethnography, practice research and narrative enquiry. As a direct result of the work undertaken, I propose an early iteration of a new methodology for making theatre on minority culture: Third Voice Theatre.

Inspired by S. Anksy's Yiddish play Der Dibuk, *HSWR* follows the journey of a supernatural character through a liminal landscape inhabited by various narratives expressed in the fieldwork interviews I conducted. These stories expose complexities around Jewish identity, whether self-expressed or socially imposed. The play draws on my experience of perceptions of Jewish culture in Ireland as expressed by some non-Jews, and as non-Jewish myself. The play also seeks to address some of the misconceptions about Jewish heritage and incidences of antisemitisim in Ireland through social and historical lenses. Creating a piece of theatre on this subject allowed me to reimagine negative representations of Jewish characters in Irish theatre. This processes also enabled me to question the reasons why there remains a dearth of Jewish and minority voices in Irish theatre.

The presentation of Jewish voices on the Irish stage remains a largely unresearched area as this thesis demonstrates. Examining the influencing factors that contribute to the omission of minority voices from the Irish canon in a practice research capacity is my original contribution to the field of theatre performance studies. By addressing the issues identified in relation to Jewish identity I aspire to expand this and similar conversations to include other ethnic minorities.

The overall aim of this work is the disruption of hegemonic narratives of cultural and national Self in Irish theatre narratives.

Keywords: Jewish identity, Ireland, representation, dybbuk, narrative enquiry, supernatural, ethnography, salvage ethnography, Third Voice Theatre.

Declaration

I, Aideen Wylde, declare that this thesis is my own work and has never been previously submitted by me or any other individual for the purpose of obtaining a qualification.

Signed:

Aideen Wylde

Date:

22/09/20

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Dedicated to my beloved parents,

Donal and Jean Wylde

...and to Lopez,

2014- 2019.

‘Diversity is a strength. Difference is a teacher.
To fear difference is to learn nothing.’
Hanna Gadsby, Nannette.

‘There will always be someone to say, ‘tell me a story’, and someone there to respond. Were this not so, we would no longer be fully human.’
Richard Kearney, On Story.

‘How to remember an identity that you cannot name?
Speak to the ghost…’
Esther Fitzpatrick, …And On Remembering

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Introduction

0.1 “Tell me a story out of your mouth…”

I grew up in a tradition of words and tales. And in a newsroom.

Not physically, per say, but in almost every other sense of the imagined bustle of a 1980s New-York-Times-from-the-movies to be. My father worked as a photojournalist for the local newspaper before I was born, and later as a cameraman for the national broadcaster. His were stories of images and people, woven together from the tacit into the tangible. Yet his trade as an image-maker did not exclude language – his passion for wordsmithery was evident in the exchange of colourful colloquy with the journalists at his work, or the Christian Brother who read Damon Runion’s *Guys and Dolls* with gusto to his primary school class on special occasions.

Dad was essentially on call to the newsroom 24/7, and by default, so were we. It was the 80s and the coveted house phone was the gatekeeper of the latest breaking story – an explosion at a factory; a visiting VIP; a strike at a nearby factory. When a story would break, often in the middle of the night, scant detail about a fishing boat missing off Passage East or how many local St. Patrick’s Day parades were to be featured would be relayed rapid-fire to my mother and sisters and I, the schedule for the day falling into place around the developing report. In the evening, we would all gather around the news to witness how the full details of the event had come together over the course of the day for the three-minute summation on “The 6 o’clock”. Sometimes we went to work with him for the day and saw the construction of stories from beginning to end, when it appeared before the nation on the evening news. There were the stories of his visits to Africa, Newfoundland, Rome and The United States – places of wild exoticism compared to the concrete landscapes of unemployment-riddled 1980s Ireland. All these stories and their witnessing brought the entire world into our home.

Then there were the detailed and nuanced stories my mother would tell us on restless nights about her own childhood – the mischiefs she got up to; the nicknamed neighbours and the idiosyncrasies that earned them these monikers; the stories of my grandfather's life as an international prize-fighter in the 1930s. Stories about games she played and invented, the sweets she ate in "the olden days", of how her parents met and what she knew of her own grandparents and beyond. Sometimes there was a creepy ghost story about a changeling, a banshee, or the former borstal in town now haunted by the terrifying spectre of a moaning and limping ex-inmate. Local lore was recounted to us in the story of Bridget Cleary and the infamous "Burning of Ballyfadlea", or "The Abernath Abduction" – true-life penny dreadfuls that would strike a thrilling fear into the hearts of us children. And at Christmas, my father would set visions of sugarplums dancing in our heads with vivid descriptions of the inside of his family's grocery shop on the main street in Ennis, and the magical emporium of spices and smells that it was transformed into every Christmas. Story informed our every moment, lifting us out of the ordinary into the infinite possibility of the curiously imagined.

Looking back, it's fair to say that my own passion for storytelling is rooted in these influences – I have no doubt that I would always have ended up as a storyteller in some shape or form. Against this backdrop it makes sense then, that I would become passionate about inhabiting the lived experiences of others and about finding an audience to deliver them to. This childhood, drowned in narrative, revealed to me the transporting possibilities of tales and *scéals*; the ability of the best *seanachai* to captivate and hold their audiences and propel them from adventure to tragedy, or from heartache to elation at the simplest turn of phrase. It is little wonder then that I would later become fascinated by the apparatus of testimony, learning the craft of recital in different ways from both my parents. In the art of oral history acquired through the minutely detailed nostalgia of life in times past – the "what must it have been like..." of hidden histories. My niece Lois refers to these as "stories out of your mouth". When she does, I can't help but picture the generations before us who did exactly the same – the hundreds of teller's mouths uttering our family stories as if some Beckettian *mise-en-scene*. In our house we were armed from the get-go to navigate the world through story, so we did.
I grew up to become an actor, after all…

0.2 Best practice

As an artist it has been imperative for me to develop the most useful blend of practice as a vehicle for inquiry and knowledge development during this research peregrination. However the disadvantage for the artist can occur where the labelling of such approaches becomes unnecessarily restrictive and contrary to the naturally evolving process of art-making. Piccini states that the binary put forward by the lens of practiced-based, practice-led and practice-as-research are becoming increasingly difficult to justify, given that the pursuit of "embodied knowledges" does not bend so easily to the will of accepted systems of academic validity (2003, p.192). Whether these embodied knowledges should attempt to bend to academic validity is a point of continued debate amongst those on both sides of the field of PARIP (Practice As Research In Performance). My research is propelled by an overall desire to gain insight into the ethics of cultural production in theatre and performance. Broadly speaking this overarching concern regarding the ethics of representation can be framed thus; i) What are the processes involved in making a theatre of cultural representation of minority communities in Ireland? This question speaks to the influence of the cultural context in question, but also to the processes involved in theatre making and where similar processes have been realised elsewhere. Zooming in, this arts practice research initially focuses on a case study test of this question with reference to the Irish-Jewish community or those who identify as Jewish living in Ireland, so subsequent questions emerge - ii) How have/are the Jewish community presented in theatre arts here and elsewhere, and how might these processes and resulting conversations be impacted by the creative actions of a maker who is not of that tradition? This thesis moves from the broadly speaking to the specific, and in doing so ultimately moves towards the development of a wider-reaching methodology that speaks to the concerns of question (i) but was developed as a result of the exploration of the specificities of question (ii). The non-linear evolution of the process was achieved through constant referral to a reapplication of multi-modal research tools and influences, meaning that the research itself is mercurial but continually affords new perspectives on the questions posed.

How best then to locate atypical academic contributions such as the one proposed here in the site of PARIP? To situate this work as practice-based research then, where the created artefact in the hub of the critical knowledge generated, is one possibility. So too might it be possible to view the conversations at work here through the lens of practice-led

research, where the performance practice itself is under scrutiny and the wider research context is a way into that practice development. The term practice-as research (PaR) might also be employed if the accompanying critical exegesis was deemed unnecessary as the created artefact is deemed the embodied contribution to new knowledge (Skains 2018, p.85). But it is perhaps Baz Kershaw's uncomplicated definition of 'practice research' (falling under the broader umbrella term 'arts practice research'[1]) that sits more closely with my process intentions in this instance, where the research is conducted through (amongst other methods);

> [...] live performance practice, to determine how and what it might be contributing in the way of knowledge or insights about the forms, genres, uses, etc., of performance itself, for example with regard to their relevance to broader social and/or cultural processes.
>
> (2002, p.138)

That is to say, how might the creation of a live performance generate new conversations and knowledge on the questions proposed and in previously unexplored ways? Or as I ask this question, how does theatre contribute to the architecture and processes of community? As a non-Jewish researcher/practitioner/maker conducting this research and practice I sometimes found my identity to be the cause of challenges to the work, but also as the means for new perspectives on how we tell our story, and who we include in "our story". My unique positionality as non-Jewish but intrinsically linked to the community through long-standing friendships and creative collaborations hollows out new spaces for the interruption of out-of-date discourses regarding the Jewish in Ireland. The presence of my outsider identity also permits further questioning around staid narratives and representations that perpetuate amongst non-Jewish *and* Jewish communities alike. 'Just as it is generally assumed that there is one true version of history, it is similarly assumed that there are true, stable meanings and definitions – whether of genders or nations' (Mullins 1991, p.34). Within the practice element of the research I was able to interrogate

[1] The term 'arts practice research' refers to the recently established body of academic work concerned with undoing previously existing divisions between mind (academic/theoretical) and body (embodied/imaginative) modes of knowledge generation. Jagodzinski and Wallin attest that art is inherently both ontological and epistemological in its concern with 'the way of the world' (2013, p.25), and achieves academic legitimisation for this very reason. This thesis and the accompanying practice research should be considered as contributing to the broader field of arts practice research, but more specifically to theatre and performance practice research, and is referred to throughout simply as 'practice research'.

some of these presumed stable meanings – what is Irishness or Jewishness, and according to whom? I experimented with ideas of visibility by adapting the folkloric figure of the dybbuk[2] to map the stories of the community, whilst also using the metaphor to explore my own experience as researcher / performer / Irish / non-Jewish / female etc. The kind of postdramatic theatre made in this practice research 'has thus not given up on relating to the world but crucially no longer *represents* the world as a surveyable whole' (Lehman 2006, p. 23). As Trimingham advocates for the forward planning of the artist/researcher in practice-based research to support an unpredictable output in so much as that is possible, so Kershaw advocates for the retrospective provision of insight into how the work came to be through the variables of the act of live performance.

The creative culmination of this research could absolutely have been the transformation of raw interview data to the page in the form of a script, without the added element of live performance. However this would neither have sated my instincts as a performer, nor as the originator of this research question given my unique positionality within the subject matter. Instead, my own preferred description of the 'discursive and non-discursive forms of reflective practice' (Hughes et al 2009, p. 187) documented in this thesis is simply the term practice research. It infers the interplay of theory and practice, as opposed to a following or leading of one mode over the other and does not imply a processual hierarchy. This allows for a non-linear approach to the development of a methodology where multiple sources interact with each other – fieldwork, experiment, creative collaboration and peer review, live performance, reflection, and analysis. To borrow from Piccini (2003, p.192), the uncomplicated definition of practice research tessellates with my own encounters with practice outside of research and allows for reflexive reciprocity between modes of thinking and modes of playing. Yet the rigour, focus, outputs, ethics and intentionality of practice *research* processes requires artistic accountability, not always present (arguably necessary) in other creative contexts. The idea that practice research is 'at ease in generating troublesome contradictions', satisfies that sometimes

[2] A dybbuk (from Yiddish folklore) is described as a discontented soul who, usually having departed life suddenly, searches for a living host whom they will possess until exorcised by a rabbi. The first mention of the character in Yiddish folktale was around the turn of the twentieth century, though suggestions of the character have existed since the Middle Ages. See Chapter 6: Ghosts and Golems and Jews – Oi Vey! for an extensive examination of the artistic inspiration behind *HSWR*.

awkward interplay of artist/academic (Kershaw 2011, p.64). A purely research-led process would have denied my instincts as a performer. A messy process with inconclusive outcomes is no less valid than measurable findings. In fact, this is the very nature of devised theatre, and the rehearsal process, the development of a new script. Fitzpatrick reflects on the dual roles of the practice or arts researcher thus;

> […] as I 'put on the shoes' of a researcher I had no clear path or map that pointed to a designated ending. The role was only partially defined; it required improvisation, a responsiveness to embodied practices and space to evolve through the process.
>
> (2017, p.62)

In a similar way, this arts practice research, and the conscious inclusion of my artist-scholar experience, ratifies a collision of the theoretical and experiential at the central conceptual location of the research; the body. That is to say, the *dybbuk* character, the interview participants and the historical contexts were embodied through me. This practice research was influenced in many ways by the work of Esther Fitzpatrick and her arts-response research on uncovering her family genealogy as white European colonists in 19th century New Zealand. Fitzpatrick looks frequently to quantum physics theorist Karen Barad and her new materialist concepts of 'the entanglement of matter and meaning, past and future' (2016, p.7). Spatz also maintains the position that embodied research permits the entanglement of different forms of documentation and enactment because 'embodied practice derives its structure and meaning primarily from lineages of technique' (2017, p.13). Similarly Fitzpatrick uses arts-based methods like painting, poetry and the traditional Chilean art of figurative tapestry (*arpillera*) to summon up the ghosts of her ancestry so as to disrupt homogenous narratives of colonial identity. It is through her making, through a collision of matter and meaning, that Fitzpatrick is able to bring new stories into being so that the past may be re-materialised beyond the personal and into the wider social and political arena (Fitzpatrick and Bell 2016, p.9). In creating an embodied practice for *Here Shall We Rest,* the play that was the practical culmination of this research,, I was attempting something similar to Fitzpatrick's work by acknowledging myself as the instigator of new discourses being presented through the embodiment of the Dybbuk as metaphor. The cultural context in this research is more concerned with themes of hybrid identity and lost voices than with the lasting effects of a colonial past.

In terms of structural design, this thesis is intended to mirror the multimodal peregrination of the arts practice research at its core. Though the Jewish community in Ireland is the initial case study of this site, the argument expands throughout to present overall methodological findings with a wider application than specific to the representation of this singular minority community. In order to achieve a synthesis of all the research tools employed, and to layer the social and theoretical contexts that accompany this work, the thesis moves through a number of disciplines towards its conclusion. To begin, an historical account of the Jewish life in Ireland is offered, followed by an examination of some of the narratives that continue to dominate representations of this community here and elsewhere. A theoretical framework centring on notion of Othering is then brought forward looking to resolves questions such as who is Other; who defines Other, and under what conditions? Key theories from two major (Jewish) thinkers, Derrida and Levinas, are referred to at this point in response to philosophical and ethical questions posed around staging the concept of Other. From here the thesis moves towards a description and analysis of my research methodology as it evolved, followed by an overview of some of the folkloric and ethnographic inspirations behind the making of *Here Shall We Rest.* Other elements of the production, and the design influences and creative collaborations, are detailed next. Lastly, I offer research conclusions and findings to the reader – primarily that of an emergent new methodology for staging minority experience, Third Voice Theatre, and its current component parts. At three moments during this thesis you will find yourself in the midst of my personal fever dreams - unpleasant visions that by medical definition occur during bouts of illness when the body temperature is elevated. These three conceptualised sections are offered in lieu of a traditional chapter of conclusions. Here they are intended to serve as critical reflection and creative observation of three key areas of concern or interest that arose during the making of this work – cultural appropriation; staging multiculturalism; a personal exegesis on performing as the dybbuk character. Each section begins with an extract from one of my own dreams, real or imagined, relating to the theme of the section in question. It may feel as if these reflections interrupt the flow of the thesis – this is absolutely my intention. Just as you might arrive abruptly into the unfolding narrative of one of your own dreams, or awake fitfully from its nightmarish images, so too should these passages disrupt the reader from settling into the rhythm of the overall thesis. That experience is the journey of the Dybbuk, who is wrenched from one distant place to another, more unsettling landscape. I have compiled a suggested playlist of music to accompany the reading of this thesis; original

works composed for *HSWR* and music that inspired aspects of the overall practice. (See appendix F for a link to this playlist)

At other moments in this thesis, where reflexive and useful, I have deferred to extracts from the original text of *HSWR*, field diary entries, emails, found text stimulus, photographs taken by me during the process, and some poetic or literary responses to particular moments along the research journey. Including these was a complimentary decision to two of the methodical approaches at work – that of the eclecticism of the bricoleur researcher, and the overall development of an embodied practice research. The first, bricolage research, is a process assembling artefacts of cultural phenomena, "at-hand" to form new discourses on the subject in question. Rogers defines the role of the bricoleur as 'a critical, multi-perspectival, multi-theoretical and multi-methodological approach to inquiry' (2012, p.1). For me this approach to social inquiry parallels the mechanisms and multiplicity of perspectives often found in processes of devising new theatre outside of the academy – methods which are often deployed informally by artists informally, or *ad hoc*, in the day-to-day application of our trade. Making this play echoed those fluid and evolutionary paths, open-ended and posing as many questions in its aftermath as it did at its inception.

This research is a story of stories, and of the shared tradition of telling. The process is inspired by centuries old oral traditions, cultivated in every corner of the world and especially so in Ireland. The transposition of experience between teller (participants/me) and listener (me/audience) throughout this research mimics this age-old exchange, but in its own circumstantially unique context. However I do not consider this to be a work of autoethnography, in the exclusivity of that term. My personal positionality is important to this process but it is not the sole focus of the research. The journey is not entirely about me, though it does acknowledge the ways in which my stance and connections had influenced the process. Instead it is about how as the ethnographer I observe others, and how, as the actor, I use these observations to make leaps of imaginative empathy to portray others to open up conversations of wider social implication. No grand personal narrative accompanies this research; no "unique selling point" that might expose me as a marginalised person in some way and therefore attuned to the marginalisation of others. I am aware of many of the places of privilege from which I research as white, middle

class, cis, educated heterosexual and European, notwithstanding the prejudices women continue to experience. My interest in hybrid cultural identity and in storytelling is the driving force behind this work. I do not wish to speak "for" others. Instead I hope that other voices speak "through" me for the audience, and that creating this work together proved a worthwhile experience for them in some way. I am not lending them a voice, to be clear on this. I am lending them *my* voice, my instrument, which they are free to use as they please. It was through encounters with the participants and the collision between their contributions and my creative approach that a synergistic editorial voice work was created. It would not have been made by either in isolation yielding the same outcomes.

Figure 1 (0.2): Performing "The Jewman" in *HSWR*, February 2019.

0.3 Irish? Jewish? Irish-Jewish?

My practice research is an exploration of processes used in making a piece of verbatim theatre / ethnodrama around contemporary Irish-Jewish identity, or Jewish identity in Ireland. The intention is to serve partly as an exposition of the history of this community in Ireland for a wider audience, but also to explore the community's status as a minority group with distinct traditions within the context of Irishness.[3] *Here Shall We Rest (HSWR),* the play created as the practical iteration of this research, was a quasi-verbatim one-woman play dealing with issues of hyphenated identity which I wrote, directed,

[3] See Chapter 1: No Such Thing as an Irish Jew for an overview of the socio-historical backdrop.

designed and performed. My personal relationship to Jewish identity remains vague and largely uninteresting, but central to this conversation, nonetheless. I am not Jewish, but I have studied Jewish culture and the Holocaust in Ireland, Poland and Israel. I am curious about the living out of this religion, and by the theatricality of religions in general, and equally curious about the many post-Enlightenment, postmodern permutations of Judaism that exist today. I was saddened by the closure of the last synagogue in Cork in 2016, and by the mourning of this loss amongst the tiny community there. I had an intense emotional and unexpected response whilst visiting Jerusalem, yet my gut nauseates at the ongoing subjugation and struggle of the Palestinian people. I am a friend to a Holocaust survivor whose story I feel compelled to witness as this violent history begins to fade from physical memory. I am interested in the sharing of previously unheard voices onstage, and the ambiguity of being both within and without society in some way. Lastly, invoking the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas who said that the Jewish man always comes to know the world and relate to it in terms of Other first (Levinas 1997, p.22), I, the actor, feel some kinship here having lived out the lives of Others almost my entire life.

In the beginning, I wanted to make a play that would examine contradictions at the heart of previously hegemonic constructs of Irishness at a moment when we, the people of Ireland, were rewriting our projections of self culturally and constitutionally on the global stage. What better way to examine these hitherto upheld constructs then, but by looking at identity through the lens of a minority community who have managed throughout our history to reside on both the fringes and within the very heart of Irish life, through their cultural, political and socially-efficacious contributions to the State. The Irish-Jewish community has historically negotiated a somewhat liminal space between presence and absence; sometimes by choice, sometimes through circumstance. My aim was to develop a piece of work that might further our understanding of contemporary Irish-Jewish identity, laying to rest some of the staid and often racist representations that exist to date. At the same time I wanted to pose the question of why these and other voices are not widely heard in Irish theatre. Over a period of a couple of years I interviewed a small number of Jewish people living in the Republic, and though my initial prescriptive call-out sought participants who identified specifically as Irish-Jewish, the ever-surprising nature of active research turned up some unexpected others. Those who were most comfortable in exploring this territory with me revealed a more complex sliver of life in Ireland in 2019 than I had anticipated. There was the Israeli who had just received her

Irish citizenship and who had campaigned for Traveller's rights organisations[4]; a recent convert to Judaism from Catholicism; a Holocaust survivor with a penchant for Irish breakfast fry-ups; a sacred music singer whose home was Ireland but whose heart-home is Jerusalem. Riessman suggests that feminists and social anthropologists have developed more relational modes of interviewing than were previously practiced by those involved in qualitative data collection processes like this, and which can better accompany the retelling of complex and layered identity narratives such as these (2000, p.169).

So as to present as broad a range of experiences and definitions of identity as possible, I consciously sought out points of crossover (and diversion) between Jewish experience here and some of the pre-existing culturally exclusive Irish narratives. These types of narratives have, until more recently, focussed on recurring themes like the Irish-Catholic experience; male family relationships; the violent political struggle for independence from British rule; post-Famine stories chronicling the effects of the blight and mass emigration on poor, rural, Irish-Catholic communities and the lasting genealogical effects of this heritage.[5] Much of the Irish canon of theatre deals heavily and famously with these and related themes. As a practitioner and audience member I was often bored by the repetition in story I encountered and frequently wondered why other diverse voices that could provide a broader aspect of the notion of Irish experience were not being represented. Just as in the classic improv comedy game "Yes, but..."– whereby every sentence of dialogue begins with those two words – I often wondered "Yes, but who else are we?". Contemporary themes regarding Irish identity must now be updated to include not only our increasing multiculturalism but other recent major social and political change like the decline of the Catholic influence, State, Church and healthcare abuse tribunals, equal marriage rights, the abortion referendum of 2018, our wider European identity and globalisation etc. The list is endless and is still in need of some updating to make space for more minority voices.

The original working title for this research, "Re:Membrance of Absence", sought to encapsulate both the embodied experience of a hyphenated identity through practice, and

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[4] The term 'Travellers' referrers to the indigenous ethnic Irish community whose members maintain a traditionally nomadic way of life. English speakers, they also have their own language known as *Sham* which combines Gaelic phrases with the English language and local slang.

[5] Given that the Jewish community was a predominantly urban-based population at the time of the Famine (mid-1840's) Jewish narrative, both fact and fiction, are not at the forefront of accounts.

the impact of the passing of an Irish-Jewish community from civic and cultural consciousness due to a steady decline in population throughout the 20th century. Originally, I had intended to try to capture the perceived decline of a niche hybrid identity, Irish-Jewish, from the national ethnic profile. At the inception of this research the most recent census records confirmed the steady downward trajectory in members of the community from approximately 5,000 at the turn of the twentieth century, to less than half that at 1,984 as per the 2011 census figures.[6] Ronit Lentin in her paper, *Ireland's Other Diaspora: Irish-Jewish within/Irish-Jewish without* (2002b), suggests that diasporicity is the predominant and accepted feature of a community where opportunities for young Jews to participate in a healthy social life and find Jewish partners are hugely limited. Other theories for these falling numbers include the disadvantages facing Ireland as an island nation in maintaining kosher standards, and infighting which lead to the break-up of several worship communities and quorums at various points in the history of the community. I felt instinctually that the performed act might be a socially efficacious way of addressing visibility issues regarding this particular hyphenated identity – drawing on cultural theorist Gloria Anzaldua's assertion that 'the future depends [...] on the straddling of two or more cultures - that is, a change in the way we see ourselves and the ways we behave' (2012, p.80). Where better to explore this assertion than in the suspended disbelief of a live theatre experience – a place where any hyphen is possible?

Plummer asserts that '[f]or narratives to flourish there must be a community to hear; for communities to hear, there must be stories which weave together their history, their identity, their politics' (1995, p.87). A framework sympathetic to ideals such as Plummer's underpinned my theoretical and creative approaches from the outset. From field interviews I gathered personal narratives, expressions of both Irishness and Jewishness, and wove these and other materials into a symbolic framework inspired by the Yiddish folktale, *Der Dybbuk.* In my version of the narrative a transient soul gets violently injected into a nondescript and unfamiliar landscape. This figure came to represent both the metaphor of presence, and also a version of me, the PhD student lost in a liminal moment during the research. The figure was also my shape-shifting actor-self, caught in a loop of possession by the stories of others. My dybbuk played against the

[6] At the time of writing up the 2016 census recorded 2,557 Jewish persons in 2016 up from 1,984, an increase of 28.9%.

offstage voice of a Rabbi who became a composite of all the provocateurs I have encountered during this experiment, the character also serving as a guide for the audience through a potentially unfamiliar cultural identity. My dybbuk and Rabbi served subversion, role-playing everything from an imagined specialist subject round from the quiz show *Mastermind*, to the real-life story of my encounter with an antisemitic conspiracy theorist on a blind date; to the interrogation of an eyewitness during the local history of the Limerick pogrom. Between the gaps in shared grotesquery and ritual that these two characters played out were interwoven extracts of the collected interview material, found text and found song to weave a bricolage tapestry of Jewish life in Ireland representational of the knots and entanglements that shape this complex cultural profile. Fitzpatrick says that as bricoleurs 'our senses need to be alert to the stories that happen upon us, a serendipitous Facebook post, stories lying in wait in an old newspaper article, or the someone who are sometimes sitting with us in the room' (Fitzpatrick 2017, p.10), and it is this serendipity which allows us to 'make sense of embodied, sensory and, at times, messy research processes' (Ibid,, p.9).

It is important to emphasise that much of the social history, documentary, and memoir I engaged with of the Jewish community in Ireland appears, to date, to be offered by those speaking from particular moments in history who considered themselves as Irish-hyphen-Jewish. Perhaps this distinction speaks to feelings of national pride, of religious observance, and of the role of cultural Judaism in non-religious concepts of self. But perhaps the distinction also speaks to a concern of being seen as a marginalised, subordinated other at a time when religious integration did not often figure in discussions around cultural authenticity. Putting the Irish first may have been a way for some of deflecting antisemitic scepticism regarding issues of nationalism and allegiance. Wynn refers to this as a way to 'reinforce claims of an advanced level of Jewish integration into Irish society' in order to deflect antisemitic sentiment (2017, p.11; see also Chapter 3.3: Post-colonial Othering). Ultimately those who were keen to make the distinction of being specifically Irish-Jewish were predominantly not the kinds of participants represented by this work. Instead those who came forward located themselves, by self-definition, in layered third spaces of national, religious and cultural identity. Whilst perhaps none of these participants encountered the types of social and economic oppression often associated with minority groups who experience Othering, several spoke of feelings of difference from the dominant cultural population and how those feelings have sometimes proved advantageous or otherwise.

In making the play *HSWR* I could have bypassed verbatim contributions and opted for a reinterpretation of dominant socio-historical accounts of Jewish life in Ireland, but this route was neither of interest to me as a maker; nor is it in-keeping with the ethos of the bricolage artist-researcher as curator of diverse source materials. Valuable points of cultural intersection became visible where feelings of shared Irishness or shared humanity occurred and it was at these points where the audience, perhaps not as versed in the subject, would hopefully find a way in. The challenge lay in achieving a mutual fluency around Jewish identity whilst avoiding a cultural white-washing of something that both maker and audience are outside of, experientially speaking. This so-called "levelling of the playing field" was achieved in a number of ways throughout the text – one example that springs to mind is in the testimony of Woman 2 and her referencing of the popular Irish film *Into the West* as the source for her intangible connection to the landscape of Ireland and the idea of Irishness. Lack of prior knowledge was also bridged through the "making strange" of all identities at play. The supernatural Dybbuk acts as interlocutor between the spectator and the subject; the disembodied voice of the unspecified teacher (in the script, "Rabbi") acts as a guide through the world for all present; the audience are directly addressed and occupy interchangeable roles of interviewer / spectator / confident. The Dybbuk's hesitation towards engaging with the world of the play came to symbolise both mine and the audience's tentative encounter with the subject, but also as a way for me to expose my own vulnerabilities in making the work. Forcing these collisions of culture and identity, spectator and player, was an attempt to 'break up what exists [so that] the so-called "reality" we take for granted [is] broken into abstraction in order to be reassembled and possibly understood' (Ambrose 2019, para. 9). The Dybbuk, the world it inhabits, and the truncated nature of scene/episode were all abstractions, whilst tropes such as the inclusion of local and colloquial histories speaks more tangibly to some degree of common knowledge on the part of the audience. Choices like the recounting of uniquely Jewish experiences in Irish accents, or the interplay of Irish folklore and song with Jewish narratives confronting previously accepted images of the community and instead became declarations of parity between audience, maker and subject. Looking back perhaps a certain naivety accompanied the beginning of this research. There might have been a notional desire to pay homage to a purportedly disappearing Jewish community in Ireland – an attempt to make the absent present in a piece of theatre "of" them. This reads like a memorialisation of the community, when in fact what emerged

during the process was an altogether more intricate portrait of the subtleties of Jewish life in Ireland.

0.4 "Reflect. Remember. Reimagine."

For context it is useful to note that my initial research peregrination was formulated at a time when the very concept of Irish identity was under real scrutiny across many fora of Irish civic life. In 2015 the national psyche was preoccupied by preparations for the most significant year in the Decade of Centenaries; the one hundredth anniversary of the events from 1912 which culminated in Irish independence in 1922. The official theme of the 2016 commemorations – *Reflect. Remember. Reimagine*. – was intended as a 'callout especially to [the] young people from a variety of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, which represent the more cosmopolitan Ireland of the future' (Wynn 2017, p.6). Similarly, in a call-out for flagship research projects on the Decade of Centenaries across various disciplines the Irish Research Council noted that, 'Ireland, and being Irish, is complex and can be expressed in a myriad ways' (Marking the Decade of Centenaries, n.d.). The prospect of 2016 loomed large on the cultural horizon. One hundred years on from the deeply mythologised (albeit unsuccessful) 1916 Easter Rising, here was an opportunity to reflect upon what had come to make the Irish "Irish", and how we want a reimagined self to be relayed on the global stage. Here was an opportunity to present Ireland as a renewed and modern nation, with an altered sense of self, and in the processes shed some of the weighty shackles of church and institutional scandals that had continued to emerge since the mid 90s, and which revealed bitter and shameful histories and the aftermath of these traumas left behind on the national psyche.

A new Éire, beyond the paddywhackery of Hollywood representations past, was to be drawn up amidst a unifying swell of national pride for the sacrifice and struggle that had paved the way for political sovereignty. In this new Éire the legendary hero of Celtic mythology, Setanta (usually rendered as a pale skinned, blue-eyed, red-haired, camán-wielding, pseudo elf/athlete) was brought to new life by a black dancer in a live televised spectacular that charted the history of Ireland through dance theatre, song and drama. A thrilling regeneration of the mythology that was drummed into us as children was presented, and I cried at the telly and this striking image of hope for a fully-integrated Ireland. For a brief moment, this image validated the idea that '[a] shared idiom of

resistance and a reservoir of social memory, national remembrance can be a powerful tool in constructing cultural identity' (O'Malley-Younger 2016, p.456). But underneath the pomp of televised military displays and highly stage-managed re-enactments, real and complex questions of authenticity, person and place remained at stake. Whilst De Valera's "good, Catholic Ireland" was buckling under the weight of this outdated and uncomfortable mantle, the new, improved Ireland put forth a more tolerant disposition. This was most notably affirmed with the overwhelming support in favour of the Same-sex Marriage Referendum, passed in May of 2015. In early 2016, the Abbey Theatre held a symposium entitled *Theatre of Change* (Crawley 2016) [7], which launched their own commemorative programme for the year *Waking The Nation* and posited wider ideological questions about the State and identity, art and feminism, and the role of Irish artists in activism, amongst others (Abbey Theatre 2015). The very title of the event suggested that theatre, particularly Irish theatre, could serve as an agent for societal change and was one of many in a catalogue of expressions that year, regarding who we had been and where we wanted to be.

In contrast to the cultural retrospection happening in Ireland the on-going refugee crisis in Europe reached breaking point by the summer of 2015. Over a few short months the number of economic migrants from many parts of Africa and refugees fleeing the war in Syria became overwhelming, as was the death toll from both groups crossing the Mediterranean Sea. On the issue of migration Marranca affirms that 'the flow of refugees moving over the surface of the globe, ...has focussed the minds of cultures everywhere, forcing each country to address its own questions of identity and definition' (Marranca cited in Marranca and Dasgupta 1991, p.11). As the image of the body of little Aylan Kurdi, washed up on the shore in Lesvos, seared itself into the social consciousness, Ireland would be faced with the same question that has often spilled from its own emigrants' mouths – will you open your door to the stranger? In the case of this research that question translates to something like, "How did you treat the stranger that came to

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[7] The *Theatre of Change Symposium* was the first event in the national theatre's commemoration programme for 2016, the 100th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising. The three-day programme of presentations, debates and performances sought to address the contribution of theatre arts to activism and the changing face of Ireland society and social issues. The official details of the symposium are no longer available on the Abbey Theatre's website, however this article from *The Irish Times* details the event: https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/abbey-s-theatre-of-change-opens-with-the-body-politic-1.2505901. *Waking the Nation* refers to the theatre's planned programme of events for the same year; the original promo video is available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HL6_Bh2nQd0.

your door?”. The resonance of the stories emerging from the Syrian refugee crisis spoke to me on a molecular level, but as theatre-making often feels like a selfish and indulgent act I questioned whether I could open any new discourses with audiences about how we welcome the Other. Nevertheless, I approached the research and practice optimistically on this basis:

> I see the stranger as not inherently or essentially different, but as a figure that produces, or has its difference produced, at the point of encounter with the audience. The stranger contains its audience […]
>
> (Freeman 2017, p.23)

And so this research became a process of returning to the familiar to locate the stranger within and without through a return to stories. A return to the storyteller’s calling that I inherited as a child. And by filling in these untold stories perhaps we have the chance to become what Leonard Cohen referred to as the light between the cracks (1968).

Chapter 1: No such thing as an Irish Jew

1.1 Jewish Ireland

This chapter will examine the presence of a Jewish community in Ireland as something of a counter-narrative to dominant stories of Catholic-Irishness as the authentically Irish experience. Serving as an overview of the complex historical relationship between Judaism to the Irish identity, this chapter asks whether that past has shaped societal assumptions and in turn, representations of the community in theatre, film and literature (See Chapter 2: Exit, Pursued By A Yid for more on representation). So as to contextualise the editorial and bricolage choices made in the playmaking process for *Here Shall We Rest,* it is useful to offer a brief overview of the history of Jewish Ireland so as to highlight the less than likely circumstances leading to the growth of that community here, and the aspects of that historiography that appeared most stageable for this practice research. The increased nuancing of academic analyses of the Jewish Ireland versus pre-existing autobiographical and oral history since this part of the research began is noteworthy. However, I draw repeatedly from a number of main sources throughout, owing to the fact that much material in the area is non-academic. Bernard Shillman's 1945 book, *A Short History of the Jews in Ireland* is one of the earlier collections of Jewish historiography by a Jewish author. *Jewish Ireland* (2011) by Ray Rivlin offers a useful middle ground between academic sources and the biographies and personal memoir which dominated the field for a time. Dermot Keogh's *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland* (2002) is a regularly cited source in the field containing valuable primary source and verbatim material from Jewish history, though aspects of the book have encountered some more recent scrutiny such as the reinterpretation of historical accounts by academic Natalie Wynn, whose research provides a contrast to the long-accepted mythologisation of the community (2011 and 2017).

Wynn put forward Jewish identity as 'a complex and tortured matter', and that Irish-Jewish identity presents its own specific idiosyncrasies in a country 'which up to recently had a large monolithic national culture and sense of identity' (2015, p.43). A divine preordination of sorts, bestowing an intrinsic outsiderness on the Jewish people is a

feeling that still exists for many of the diaspora, both religious and non-religious. This holy endowment, the singling out or choosing of the people of God, can be traced as far back as the Biblical story of the Jews in exile in Egypt. In the *Haggadah* (the key prayer text of Passover), God cautions Abraham to this end: 'You shall know that your seed will be strangers in a land that is not theirs', until divine intervention releases them from their servitude (Genesis 15:13). This vocabulary of exile remains a prominent feature of internal and external retelling of Jewish stories – their 'point of departure (and return) is always east of Eden', and of the Jew who 'persists in the imagination as the prototypical wanderer, exile, and nomad' (DeKoven Ezrahi 2000, p.235).

1.2 "Since when have there been Jews in Ireland?": The Celts & The Yehudim

Whilst conducting the fieldwork for this research – and it was always of great surprise to many of the non-Jewish people I spoke to – I learned that there is an active, if minute, Jewish population here. At a certain point the community was notable in size and socially much more visible than today. To some, the community remains outside of the imagined construct of what it is to be Irish – a benign, though nonetheless, Other (as discussed in Chapter 3). "Are there Jews in Ireland yeah? Where do they live? Are there synagogues here?", etc. were some of the reactions I encountered which bolstered the idea that the outsider/Other position of the Irish-Jewish community remains exotic to the wider population because of sparsity of number and therefore induces a certain societal opacity. So anomalous to some is the idea of a Jewish populace here, that the increase of the community by 28.9 per cent, less than 600 people, drew media attention in several national papers following the release of the 2016 census figures (McGarry 2017). These outsider / Other feelings, as expressed during the fieldwork interviews, ranged from sometimes undefined *difference* to the wider population, to direct and explicit experiences of antisemitism.

In fact, the presence of a Jewish community in Ireland has various and disputed starting points dating as far back as the eleventh century. Prior to this, anecdote suggests a more divine connection between the Celtic peoples of Ireland and the twelve tribes of Israel. In what was at one time the most comprehensive collected history of the Jews in Ireland, Bernard Shillman's aforementioned book recounts how the inauguration stone of the

High Kings of Ireland at the Hill of Tara was believed to have found its way to Ireland from the Holy Land via Spain in around the sixth century. The *Lia Fáil* (or "Stone of Destiny", now located at Westminster Abbey), is said to have been the stone upon which the Biblical Jacob rested his head and dreamt of the ladder leading to heaven. It was purportedly brought to the royal site by Scota, a Pharaoh's daughter who married one of Moses' contemporaries and later became ancestor to the Scots Gaels (Shillman, 1945). Some folklorists contest that the narrative is an attempt by the early Christian faithful to reframe Celtic history in line with the Old Testament, impressing a sense of legitimacy upon new converts to the faith. Carey refers to this and other acts of folkloric absorption as the stretching of 'the limits of accepted dogma' in an attempt to 'create a hybrid composite culture which would be both wholly Irish and wholly Christian', as happened with many of the Irish pagan customs, gods and feast days during this period (1999, p.11). Wynn refers to these accounts as "tongue-in-cheek" re-imaginings of history which 'can be interpreted as an unconscious mystification of Irish Jewish communal origins' (n.d., p.187). Such was the impact of this folklore with its Biblical imagery; the impossible land and sea voyages of the ancient princess and the blending of the story with Early Christian chronicles, that it was included as a vignette in the staging of *Here Shall We Rest* .

The first recorded mention of Jews in Ireland can be traced to the Annals of Innisfallen when, in the year 1062, it was noted that five Jews arrived in Ireland from France with gifts to be presented to Turlough O'Briain, King of Munster. A later mention in 1232 sees the Jews of Ireland put under the custodial care of the Viceroy to Henry III which – Hyman suggests – was a signal of a population of Jews substantial enough to warrant this official recognition, although no exact figure is given (1970, p.6). There exists scant acknowledgement of Jews in Ireland during Medieval times. Those who did make their way here were most likely merchants or financiers from England, conducting occasional business in Ireland. Both Shillman and Hymen suggest that a small population of crypto-Jews were living in and around Dublin in the 15th and 16th centuries, outwardly practicing Christians but observant of Jewish custom and prayer behind closed doors. Significantly, the mayor of Youghal, Co. Cork in 1583 (a large and well-established maritime trading post in medieval Europe) was a *converso*[8] merchant named Franis Anes or Ames. He was

[8]*Converso*, or the sometimes pejorative *Marrano*, refers collectively to Spanish and Portuguese Jews who were forcibly converted to Christianity during the religious persecutions of 1492 and 1496, many of whom continuing to practice their Judaism in secret. (The dates of Francis Anes' mayoralty of Youghal differ according to the source consulted.)

the first member of the Jewish faith to hold an office of such high rank in either Britain or Ireland (Shillman 1945, p.11). In fact a number of conversos held positions of importance in Ireland around this time, handling business dealings and diplomatic negotiations with Spanish throne on behalf of some of the Irish aristocracy including the like of Hugh Dubh O'Neill (Hyman, 1970 p.7). Hebrew was taught in the newly-founded Trinity College from 1591, eventually becoming a compulsory subject.

A troubling account of judeophilia from 1621 documents the murder of a child in Dublin by his own father, named only as Grey, a fanatical philosemite who believed that this act of filicidal sacrifice might aid the restoration of the reputation of the Jewish people in the minds of Christians everywhere (Hyman, 1970 p.10). A 2014 lecture at the Dublin Jewish Museum details provisional plans made by Oliver Cromwell to lease in perpetuity the continuously problematic domain of Ireland to British Jews of any origin in a two-pronged strategy to both rid England of the Jews and Ireland of the Irish (Stafford 2014, 00:09:04). The proposition came to nothing but it does appear to be amongst the earliest in a number of pre-Zionist attempts at the establishment of a permanent, solely-Jewish state or homeplace outside of Israel.

1.3 Georgian Diaspora

The next indication of a rise in Jewish population comes around 1660 with the establishment of a synagogue at Crane Lane in Dublin by three Portuguese escapees of the Inquisition. Dublin was the second city of the British Empire, a bustling port city and a vibrant hub of architectural development and urban expansion. Shillman refers to this emergent Jewish community in the prosperous Dublin as 'one of the oldest of those which have been founded in Great Britain since the Resettlement' [9] (Shillman 1945, p.13). The founding of the aforementioned temple and the opening of a Jewish cemetery in Fairview (Ballybough) in 1718 enabled the growth of this urban Jewish population operating predominantly as merchant traders amongst the country's thriving agricultural, textile and construction industries against a backdrop of relative political stability. There is little evidence of Jewish communities in other parts of the country around this time.

[9] The mid-1650s in England saw increased ecclesiastical tolerance towards Judaism. Jews were encouraged to return to England on the provision that they could practice their faith freely and without persecution. This period is commonly referred to as the Resettlement.

In 1745 there were approximately forty-five Jewish families living in the capital- some two hundred people (Stafford 2014, 00:08:43). A second synagogue had opened at Marlborough Green (a few hundred yards from the site of today's Abbey Theatre), and an *Ashkenazi*[10] element began to emerge within the demographic, though they were generally not as affluent as their co-religionists from Spain and Portugal. By 1747 a burgeoning *Sephardic* community in Cork necessitated for the opening of a Jewish cemetery on the south side of the city. At this time, Jews in England and Ireland were still subject to the *De Judaismo* statute dating back to the Middle Ages which imposed arbitrary laws upon the Jewish population limiting dress and worship, means of livelihood and land ownership, and interaction with Christian citizens. However the Jewish Naturalisation Act of 1753 (or "Jew Bill"), proposed citizenship for all Jews on application to parliament, on account of their proven loyalty to the crown during the Jacobite Rising, Initially passed, the bill was revoked a year later following widespread antisemitic backlash from the public. The British Isles reverted to the *De Judaismo* laws which were not formally abolished until almost one hundred years later. Daniel O'Connell, the Catholic Emancipator, was ardently opposed to the act and campaigned for its removal stating that, 'Ireland has claims on your ancient race, it is the only country that I know of unsullied by any one act of persecution of the Jews' (Stafford 2014, 00:16:20). The momentary increase in the population of Jewish Ireland during the early Georgian era was short-lived, attributed in part to the following factors: the failure of Irish banks and recurring famines; intermarriage over time with local Protestant communities; economic opportunities in more established communities elsewhere and the naturally transient lifestyle of the merchant trader. There is no evidence of how these Jews maintained religious dietary and burial laws, suggesting that by living in Ireland one could not sustain these key practices long term. Finally, Hyman suggests that, 'Apostasy meant serious inroads in the exiguous Jewish ranks and was in part responsible for the community's total decline at the end of the century' (1970, p.27). The community was not to see a sizable increase again until the early Victorian period.

[10] The term *Ashkenazi* refers to the descendants of Jews from the Eastern (i.e. Russia, Lithuania, Ukraine) and Western (i.e. Rhineland areas of France and Germany) European traditions. Ashkenazim form the majority of the global Jewish population. The traditional spoken language of this community is Yiddish. Sepharic Jews, on the other hand, originate from around the Mediterranean Sea; predominantly Spain and Portugal but also the Middle East and North Africa.

1.4 From Akmene To... Ireland

Census records indicate that from the early 1900s discernible Jewish enclaves emerged in Dublin, Cork and Limerick (and indeed Belfast, although my research refers to the Republic of Ireland). These enclaves are suggested as the first notable rise in an immigrant population to Irish shores since the arrival of the Huguenots fleeing religious persecution in Belgium in the late 1600s. This next phase of Jewish history in Ireland (up until around the 1960s) was arguably the most vibrant period of the community's existence here. The early part of this period presents an important question to ethnographers in this area – how do the previously upheld arrival stories regarding the Jewish in Ireland, which continue to be passed on through both oral and written histories, contrast with emerging alternative narratives put forward by more recent investigation?

At the beginning of the mass exodus of Jews from the Russian Empire, due to what Price refers to as 'the traditional and intermittent anti-Semitism of both Orthodox Church and autocratic government' (2002, p.28), the tiny community in Ireland numbered approximately 394 (Rivlin 2011, p.29). The assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881 lead to a stream of anti-Semitic propaganda in the Russian presses. Subsequently mass rioting and looting broke out resulting in some cases in civilian massacres and the total and intended devastation of Jewish rural towns (*shtetls*) within the Pale of Settlement. [11] Keogh asserts that 'between 1880 and 1914 an estimated two million Russian Jews emigrated' (2002, p.8). The following year in 1882, the purportedly temporary May Laws were enacted by the Tsar placing further restrictions on the daily lives and trading and ownership rights of Russian Jews, and tightening pre-existing loopholes around exemption for scholars from military service (twenty-five years at the time for Jewish men and boys as young as five). For Jews in Tsarist Russia life became increasingly suffocating under the anti-Semitic stranglehold of imperial rule. Those for whom new life was possible looked beyond to Palestine, Canada, America and England – Ireland was not an obvious destination on their horizons.

[11] The Pale of Settlement refers to a contained area of western imperial Russia in which Jews were permitted to live and work, following a sustained period of religious persecution and failed attempts at mass conversion by Catherine the Great in the late 1700s. The area included parts of present-day Lithuania, east Poland, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine until around 1917, and was the inspiration for many representations in contemporary film etc. of Jewish life in Imperial Russia. (Bookbinder n.d.; Keogh 2002)

The most commonly circulated account of the arrival of Jews at this time to Ireland is that of a group of migrant Lithuanians who, with only Yiddish and smatterings of Russian to communicate by, mistakenly heard a disembarkation order for Cork as "New York!", or Ireland as the Yiddish *aier land* ("your land"), and arrived in the second city somewhat oblivious to the details of their exact whereabouts (Wynn 2011, p.9; Ó Gráda 2016, p.26). Another suggestion is that the ship's stores had run out of kosher supplies, forcing observant Jews onboard to disembark in search of sustenance rather than face certain starvation on the onward journey. Urban legends such as these appear to have little evidential standing, however this is a folklore that I heard recounted numerous times within and outside of the community, both in print and the vernacular. These benevolent and somewhat humorous accounts of the foundations of a contemporary community perhaps speak to a level of tolerance but hardly respect amongst the Irish for these refugee settlers, pitiful in their impoverished state. Indeed in parts of Europe and Britain a distinct effort was made by longer-standing Jewish communities to distance themselves from these new and "backward" arrivals for fear their own assimilation would somehow be tainted by association. Letzmann refers to the deeply 'fragile integration' of Eastern European Jews into German society around this time, where the dissolution of their Otherness was partially achieved through the use of humourous anecdotes (akin to the Irish arrival myths) to remove any threat that their strangeness presented (2015, p.67). Wynn affirms this stating that, '[a]lthough they read almost like a bad Irish joke, such [arrival] myths are not in fact unique to Ireland but form a part of the folklore of other Jewish communities of the British Isles' (2011, p.9). To what extent these stories might have been fabricated to mask the deep social traumas and economic hardships endured by these immigrants in an attempt to present their benevolence, and avoid further fractures in their already fragile integration into an Irish Catholic society, remains speculative. However the desire by many to assimilate well and quickly is evident in, for example, their tolerance of ignorant attitudes or unspoken discriminations, sometimes politely referred to as simply "curiosity" (See Rivlin 2011 and also Marcus 1993 below). I considered many times during the making of *HSWR* whether to include some of these various arrival myths in the action of the piece. In hindsight, my hesitancy was related to concerns over the further dissemination of false narratives as truths or as insensitive pastiche. I acknowledge now that including them might also have been a way to elucidate the naïve and inadequate recording of the community to date; the 'myths of accidental arrival', as Ó'Gráda refers to them (2016, p.26).

Current scholars also dispute the previously circulated assertion that a vast majority of Jewish immigrants to Ireland at this time hailed from the same Lithuanian *shtetl* – Akmene, also Akmiyan or Akmijan, even Omyman depending on the source (Keogh 2002, p.8; Elyan 1980). This particular cohort reportedly resettled in large numbers together, particularly in Cork city where others in the already established Jewish quarter insinuated that, '[A]kmiyan was "notorious as a nest of horse-thieves and smugglers"' (Rivlin 2011, p.35; Elyan 1980). Akmene appears as something of a mythologised homeland in the realm of Irish-Jewish genealogy reflecting the Yiddish concept of *der heim,* or the home country as it was known to these first-generation emigrants. Claims that the majority of migrants in the Limerick and Cork communities at this time were made up entirely of *Litvaks* (Lithuanians) from Akmene seem reaching, although not entirely impossible. In Cork, these Akmiyanis settled in a small neighbourhood of redbrick cottages on the south side of the Lee near the marina called Hibernian Buildings. The area is still referred to locally as "Jewtown", despite not having had any Jewish residents for several decades.

Figure 2 (1.4): Cork Synagogue c.2015

I visited the Cork synagogue on South Terrace in 2015, just a few short months before it closed its doors for worship for the last time. It was a poignant visit filled with the ghosts of a vibrant and recent past now confined to the memories of a few. The dog-eared corners

of the well-thumbed prayer books and *tallits* were strewn around the empty seats. In conversation with the former caretaker he told me that at one time this community numbered around 500 in that particular part of the city alone and that the streets of this neighbourhood resembled images of pre-war *Askenasim* districts of Eastern Europe. These new Eastern arrivals were indeed strange and exotic to the homogenous Catholic population, and even to the partially assimilated Sephardi population of Dublin. Rivlin claims that;

> [...] poverty-stricken immigrants, with their out-moded attire orthodox customs, Yiddish language and unfamiliarity with Irish life, were an embarrassment. 'Greeners' they called them.
>
> (2011, p.35)[12]

A similar curiosity by the Irish Catholics of 19th century Cork towards their new Jewish neighbours is expressed in these lines from the novel "A Land Not Theirs" by Irish-Jewish writer and Corkonian, David Marcus:

> It was just that they had never seen a Jew before in their lives and they were anxious to know what Jews looked like...The crowd looked into their houses, satisfied themselves that the Jews were ordinary mortals like themselves...
>
> (1993, p.114)

This and other anecdotal evidence from the various existing memoirs of Jewish Ireland suggest a predominantly relaxed blending of the two distinct cultures in these formative years, though Wynn argues that 'reminiscences of growing familiarity and burgeoning friendships between Jews and their Irish neighbours are [also] tinged with ambivalence' (n.d., p118). There is some evidence of economic interdependence between Catholic and Jewish communities, particularly in inner city settings. For example, Orthodox families might employ the services of a *Shabbes goy* to attend to duties forbidden to Jews during Sabbath hours – these included making fires, the lighting or extinguishing of candles and

[12] "Greeners" or "Greenhorns" is widely cited as a derivative of the Yiddish *griner*, a pejorative description of newly arrived immigrants from rural Russia.

lights.[13] In the RTÉ television documentary *A Jew, An Irishman, and a Corkman* the former Lord Mayor of the city, Gerald Goldberg, recalls the assimilation thus:

> On the streets we were Cork boys; at home we were Jewish. Our cultures mixed easily. We were conscious of being different, but also the same.
>
> (Mankowitz, 1981)

Any perceived harmony expressed by these and other sentiments from both fiction and memoir was not always a given in other places where Jewish and Irish populations mixed. One famously explosive incident between both communities occurred at the funeral of Rabbi Jacob Joseph in 1902 on New York's Lower East Side. During the large funeral procession, the workers at a local printmakers described as 'predominantly Irish', showered missiles from the rooftop of the factory upon the unsuspecting mourners in their thousands on the streets below (O'Donnell 2007, p. 214). A riot ensued - the factory was stormed, and widespread violence broke out between the two sides. Several hundred of the crowd were injured, but only Jews were arrested in the aftermath for inciting violence. The Irish rioters plead innocence due to the 'constant encroachment of the teeming Jewish colony upon their own shrinking domain', with the notoriously anti-Semitic New York police force, of largely Irish decent (Ibid.). The incident is but one from the period of ethnic tensions between the two immigrant groups in New York in the early Twentieth century, the violence predominantly initiated by the Irish, including multiple accounts of 'thugs beating up Jewish boys or pulling the beards of older Jewish men' (Ibid., p.221). These tensions reared and came to boiling point in Ireland, with the so-called pogrom, the infamous Limerick Boycott of 1904.

There is some evidence from around this time of the more harmonious ties between the two groups, particularly amongst New York's vaudeville community . Manhattan's Tin Pan Alley district, famous as the home of popular revue music in the late 19th and early 20th century, was also the site of an unusual 'misalliance' between Irish and Jewish immigrant performers (Gottleib 2004, p.104). Realising their cultural interchangeabilites (i.e. priest/rabbis; old world/NewWorld; humour in the darkest of times) and the broad

[13] The practice of hiring gentiles to work on the Sabbath is not permitted in some observant Jewish communities, but there are accounts that money was sometimes exchanged for these services in Ireland.

appeal of this union for audiences, *Yinglish*[14] songwriters of the day began to write lyrics that captured the juxtaposition of the Jewish and Irish condition. These were then performed by headline vaudeville acts who either were Irish/Jewish, or could play *Orish/Yinglish*. The list of culturally counterpoised songs is extensive – notable titles include, *Moysha Machree*, *My Yiddische Colleen* and even a 1925 musical *Kosher Kitty Kelly* (Ibid., p.104). And the longest running Broadway show of the 1920's, *Abie's Irish Rose*, drew on the uniquely circumstantial relationship of these two immigrant communities, on stage at least.[15]

1.5 Discordance

An inhalation. The Dybbuk hums a tune, or at least the parts it can remember. "The Jewman". As the words and melody return

from memory, the Dybbuk works up to a hearty and scathing rendition.

Keogh notes that by 1901 the population of Jews in Ireland had risen to just over 3,000. (2002, p.9) It is from around this time that the advent of one of the most striking and re-occurring characters in historical, literary and comedic representations of the community began to emerge – the peddler. Dublin's police force housed the newly arrived Lithuanian immigrants in tenement accommodation in hostel-like digs in the inner-city Chancery Lane. Here they mingled with other immigrants in particular Italians, working as street performers and makers and sellers of cheap and easily reproduced Catholic iconography - "holy pictures". It was perhaps through their interactions at Chancery Lane that many Lithuanians took up peddling the same kinds of religious wares, eking out a meagre living as traveling salesmen to the devout Catholic population. Anecdotes prevail about the

[14] The use of Yiddish words to pepper the English language.

[15] The show, which played on Broadyway for most of the 1920's follows the story of a young Jewish man in his attempt to marry an Irish American woman, and is said to have been inspired by the highly publicised relationship between leading Jazz Age songwriter Irving Berlin and his sweetheart Ellin Macaky (Rogin 1998, p.104).

many successful Jewish businesses, and craft and trade networks that grew from these humble origins owing to the ingenuity and enthusiasm of the Jewish peddlers left to fend for themselves by state and crown. The “tally” or “weekly” men walked the length and breadth of the country, sleeping in outhouses and returning home on Fridays to keep the Sabbath (Keogh 2002, p.12). ‘They were both asylum seekers and economic refugees’, notes Lentin, ‘yet no official checked their passports, no asylum process regulated their interrogation’ (2002b, para.1)

One of the most telling finds of the bricolage process in this research was the discovery of a song called *The Jewman*. The song, popular with the workers in the local bacon factory around the 1930s, paints a vivid picture of the kinds of casual antisemitism endured by these peddlers and the satirical and exploitative power dynamics of their relationship with the Irish. The song recounts a fictionalised encounter between a nameless lady and the weekly visit from the peddler of the title, who sells her some woollen blankets and returns the following week for a down-payment on the items:

> ***At the top of town Anne Street a lady does well.***
> ***Her name I won't mention. I dare not tell.***
> ***One cold winter's morning the Jewman did call,***
> ***And he unslung his bag outside of the hall.***
>
> ***He knocked at the door with his usual grin***
> ***Saying good morning, missus, is your husband within.***
> ***Says she no he's not I want nothing today***
> ***Ah take something said the Jewman don't send me away.***

The following week, upon his return for the first instalment the woman hides, hoping he will give up and go away without payment. Her presence in the house is rumbled and a scuffle for the blankets ensues:

> ***“Ah two shillings, two shillings”, the Jewman did cry.***
> ***“A fine pair of blankets from me you did buy.***
> ***Do you think me one eejit, one miserable fool***
> ***If I don't get my money I must get my wool.”***

The Jewman is beaten by the woman wielding a bucket and the pair are eventually remanded before a magistrate by a bungling comedy policeman. However, before the judge has time to pass sentence, the Jewman retracts his complaint conceding that the beating he received was not worth the hassle of retrieving his stolen goods:

Said the Jew, "Oh your Worship my poor head is sore,
And I'll never go look for me wool anymore."
(Trad.)

The song is not widely known, though the suggested tune is that a number of different popular Irish airs as is often the way of idiomatic folk music traditions, whereby the song could be sung by anyone familiar with said tunes. This would naturally allow for the wider dissemination of episodic stories through song, but in this case also of its prejudiced and satirical undertones. Though none of the characters depicted fare particularly favourably, it is the Jewish peddler, with his broken Hiberno-English, "usual grin" and persistent sales technique, who is most certainly and intentionally on the wrong side of representation. The inclusion of this little-known song to *HSWR* underlines the suspicion felt towards the new Jewish in Ireland at a time when their numbers were on the rise and their business acumen perhaps resented. It is not difficult to imagine the origins of this song and the sardonic irony with it must have been sung by workers in the bacon factory in Waterford, as is reported. Its inclusion in the final performance was a deliberate reference to the analogy between accounts of historical antisemitism and the quiet, casual antisemitism I occasionally encountered during this process, at a time when census figures corroborate that the Jewish population is once again on the rise.

Song as a vehicle for anti-Jewish sentiment and ridicule did not end with the workers in the bacon factory. When I made my First Holy Communion at the age of seven (about 1988), my classmates and I learned a song that tells the story from the New Testament of Zacchaeus, a Jewish tax collector for the Romans who was particularly miserly and opportunistic thanks to the misfortunes of others. The song, which tells the story of his outlook-altering encounter with Jesus, had a particularly catchy chorus that I still recall the lyrics to:

Zaccheus was a greedy little man.
He cheated all the people in the land.
When their rent they could not pay,
he would take their land away.
Zaccheus was a greedy little man.
Zaccheus! Zaccheus! Zaccheus was a greedy little man!
(Anon)

The song, from the Department of Education sanctioned book, *Children of God,* was sung regularly and with glee by my classmates and I, but it was only years later that the subtext of this benign little ditty became clear. Whether intentional or latent, the song evokes negative connotations towards an explicitly Jewish figure from the Bible. When I told my Jewish friends about this song, sung by Irish children of a certain generation the country over, their reaction was shock but not exactly surprise.

1.6 The Limerick Boycott, 1904

It would have been remiss for a project such as *HSWR* not to confront some of the more explicit incidents of antisemitism noted in Irish history. The Limerick boycott is still debated amongst the scholarly community as to its legitimacy as an actual pogrom, and whether the event was of as much significance in the greater scheme of intolerance as it is often credited (Keogh 2002: Rivlin 2011). The episode underlines unique and long-documented tensions between Catholic host countries and new immigrant arrivals.

Suddenly with a violent sweep of its arm, the Dybbuk scatters the delf and cakes off the table, repositioning it with as slam as a pulpit under a shaft of heaven-sent light.

Vignette – Pigtown

The Dybbuk dons the tablecloth as vestments. Then spitting and smiting as Fr. John Creagh -

> ***"The Jews were once the chosen people of God. His mercy and favours toward them were boundless. They were the people of whom was born the Messiah, Jesus Christ, our Lord and***
>
> ***Master. But they rejected Jesus, they crucified Him – they called down the curse of His precious blood upon their own heads..."***

The Limerick incident became a *cause célèbre* perhaps in part due to the outspokenness and illustriousness of its protagonist amongst local clergy and parishioners. The incident is charted in most detail beforehand and in its aftermath by Keogh in *Jews in Twentieth-Century Ireland* (2002). What might today be termed as hate speech was preached from the pulpit by the young fundamentalist priest Fr. John Creagh. At the unusually young age of 32, Creagh was director of the Roman Catholic Redemptorist order which drew the majority of its congregation from the poorer parts of Limerick's inner city and county (Ibid., p.27). Keogh portrays Creagh's preaching style as, 'demagogic and revivalist' (Ibid.), whipping the crowd to a frenzy over a number of years and encouraging intimidation and economic harassment culminating in the events of 1904. Creagh called for sanctions against Jewish traders and encouraged the refusal to pay for goods already purchased on credit, in favour of support for Catholic traders (Rivlin 2011, p 39). The local Rabbi appealed to political leaders of the day and Jewish organisations elsewhere for the support of the small community, gaining the most vocal support from well-known agrarian campaigner and Home Ruler[16] Michael Davitt, who had witnessed the violence of the Kishneff pogroms first-hand (Keogh, 2002, p.32). Despite appeals for mediation and moderation between the Redemptorist factions and the Jews of the city, tensions continued to rise, and the local police force were on high alert that Jews were the intended targets for violent attacks. A boycott began on January 18th, 1904, reported internationally and thus, by a correspondent from the *Jewish Chronicle*:

[16] Home Rule refers to the political movement from about 1870 to World War I, pre-dating the Irish Republican movement. Home Rulers petitioned for self-governance from within the British Empire as opposed to total separation from it.

> When I witnessed the organized attacks today and heard the mob yell "Down with the Jews: they kill our innocent children", all the horrors of Kishineff came back to me, and then, and only then, was I able to realise what Kishineff meant.[17]
>
> (Keogh 2002, p.35)

Though Creagh denied that antisemitism was at the core of his grievance, he continued to preach his racist dogma to the masses to great adulation, much to the mounting fear of the Jewish community. The unrest continued for several days and accounts differ on the numbers affected or injured, or whether anyone was actually killed as a direct result of the civil unrest (Keogh 2002, p. 26; Rivilin 2011, p. 39). In the end, the authorities managed to contain incidents of civil unrest and restore peace to the affected pockets of the inner city. The Jews of Limerick, numbering some 32 families, were harassed and browbeaten into surrender and economic ruin, relocating to other parts of Ireland or abroad in fear of similar acts of anti-Jewish sentiment at the hands of the Irish clergy.

Scholars now debate the overall significance of the Limerick boycott as worthy of the kinds of frequent reportage it has received in social history and academia. Fr. Creagh's vitriol towards this tiny minority, evident in the testimony of his sermons, was given further credulity by senior republican Arthur Griffith's newspaper *United Irishmen*. Griffith's antisemitic outlook is documented, with his nationalistic bravado even mentioned briefly in *Ulysses* by Bloom himself. These seeds of anti-Jewish sentiment were sown publicly and would later be seen taking root in the catastrophe of the Second World War and the diplomatic inactions of the Irish Free State. In 1990, Limerick restored its tiny Jewish cemetery in a gesture of atonement for the city's difficult past with these particular immigrants.

[17] Kishineff or Kishinev, refers to the 1903 pogrom in the Russian city of the name. 49 Jews were killed, hundreds injured, Jewish women were raped and tortured, and upwards of a thousand Jewish homes were targeted leaving 2,000 Jews homeless in widespread antisemitic rioting across the city. The Kishnev massacre was condemned by the international press, however violence towards the Jewish population continued in the region for years (Penkower 2004, p. 188).

1.7 A Land Not Theirs...

A significant moment regarding Irish/Jewish relations in the Twentieth century, if for the discomfort it brings to the conversation, is that of the treatment of Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution during World War II. The period is a complex timeline of legislative toing and froing in both internal Irish as well as global history, but what is of significance in this context are the broader attitudes made evident towards any possible expansion of the Jewish community, even in the most dire of circumstances. A mere handful (60 refugees in all) were accepted for asylum by the outwardly tolerant but inwardly exclusivist administration at the Department of Justice for the newly self-governing Irish Free State. Desperate and pauperised refugees from Europe presented little attraction to the burgeoning xenophobia of De Valera's neo-colonialist Ireland. Official documentation from the era refers to Jews seeking asylum as "alien", as the terminology of the day dictates. The existing Jewish population would be tolerated, but their growth actively discouraged. Statements like "No Jewish Labour" were a common feature of advertisements by employers seeking new workers, running in dark parallel to the, "No Irish Need Apply", or the "No Blacks, No Dogs, No Irish" attitudes experienced by immigrants in post-war Britain, or indeed the "Europeans Only" public designation of apartheid South Africa. Lentin argues that there is no substantive evidence of An Taoiseach, Eamonn De Valera expressing any condemnation of Nazi atrocities against the Jews. Instead he contextualised the Jews treatment in light of their supposed "behaviour" following World War I with reference to perceived economic gains despite crippling war reparations, The Great Depression etc. (Lentin 2002a, p. 161). Interestingly, the Free State government did grant a number of working visas to Jewish industrialists, keen on departing the increasingly tense situation in Germany and elsewhere. The Aliens Order of 1935 provided visas for a tiny number of Jewish entrepreneurs and skilled workers who were encouraged to set up businesses and factories in rural, non-industrialised parts of the country. But the tide of fascism was rising in Ireland, fronted by a number of hyper-nationalist movements. Resentment grew towards these seemingly successful outsiders who were seen as exploiting Ireland for their own economic gain. Despite rampant unemployment, no further visas were extended to Jewish-owned businesses wishing to relocate here from Europe.

For some, it was unlikely that Ireland was a dream destination like America or Palestine with its unfavourable climate, bleak economic outlook, and a majority population of

obedient and conservative Catholics. But the shame in this episode is that that same Ireland could have put aside religious and ethnic differences in pursuit of the saving of hundreds more lives had she opened her borders. The response of ignorance to the desperation of these “problematic trans-migrants” by a clearly biased administration undoubtedly had a lasting (and desired) impact on the ethnic and religious composition of the Irish population (Lentin 1997, 00:21:05; Lentin 2002a p.164). Many Jewish historians hypothesise that Ireland’s Jewish population would not have met with such a steep decline had the decision been made to allow more refugees into the Free State. It is startling to think that the indifference of Free State bureaucrats could have such a dramatic and lasting impact on an already tiny population for generations to come. Wider twentieth century Jewish history has a proportionately larger volume of source material to draw from, but ultimately had the least bearing on the evolution of this research in terms of the play-making process and representations within. Much of the memoir around this period relies on cliché and is lacking in reflexivity or critical analysis, with the exception of a very small number of scholars. Most of this material instead focuses on the social rise and fall of Dublin’s Little Jerusalem, the epicentre of the community in Ireland. If writer David Marcus’s humorous assertion that there is no such thing as an Irish-Jew were true, then a look at recent census records shows a steady downward trajectory in specifically Irish-Jewish members of the community over time corroborates the joke - from approximately 5,000 at the turn of the twentieth century to some 2,557 in 2016. Theories cited for the falling numbers of hyphenated Irish-Jewish citizens include the disadvantage of Ireland as an island nation in maintaining kosher imports and standards, and past infighting leading to the break-up of several worship communities and quorums. Whether these are knock-on effects of self-ghettoisation or self-preservation in a predominantly Christian Europe (and a predominantly still Catholic Ireland) remains disputed. However, what this reading does not indicate is that overall numbers of Jews (originally non-Irish) in Ireland have increased significantly by 28.9%. If the intention of this research is to push past exclusive and staid representations of Jews in diaspora - historically dispossessed, subjects of legislative and societal antisemitism, culturally indentured to tradition – then this positive increase needs to be accounted for.

Postmodern or post-mortem – which state of being best speaks to the condition of contemporary Jewish culture in the West? Propelled down this avenue of self-interrogation by the work of French historian Dr Dina Pino, playwright Julia Pascal concludes that these two states present cumulative metaphors for the Jewish experience,

past, present, and future (2003, p.73). That is, whether the wider Western Jewish community exists in a state of vigorous questioning and redefining of the self, or whether the question of Jewish identity should be put to rest on account of cultural rigor mortis? Litvinoff problematises these issues in a more fundamental way in acknowledging that 'deciding what makes a story Jewish touches the ambiguity of Jews as a people' (1983, p.7). Gilman echoes this same thought and questions the boundaries between "real" and "fabled" aspects of the Jew (i.e. the perpetual wanderer; the miser; the inherently Other). He suggests that a clear distinction between (or in this case, representation of) the two 'can be done only by ignoring the fact that all aspects of the Jew, whether real or invented, are the locus of difference' (1991, p .2). Reflecting on the history discussed in this chapter then, and my own outsider-provocateur position, I return to the question of what makes a story Jewish. And also, what makes a story Irish and Jewish? And crucially, must these inevitably be stories of the Other? The contentions raised by Pinto, Pascal, Litvinoff and Gilman frequently and usefully intersect with the unfolding praxis behind the making of *HSWR*. Revisiting the 1916 commemoration branding for inspiration, I am reminded that this arts practice research provides a unique opportunity to (re)construct and (re)member (embody) contemporary Jewish stories, therein disentangling the notion of the Other at home and who we include in our Irish family. *HSWR* is its own journey through *remembrance*, *reflection*, and the *reimagining* of Other stories.

Chapter 2: Exit, pursued by a Yid

As an afterword to the performance of *Here Shall We Rest* that you have just seen, I would like to briefly discuss some representations of figurative and fictional Jewishness which have taken hold as accepted narrative norms. This is done with particular reference to Shakespeare's Shylock, Joyce's Leopold Bloom and some other more recent Jewish characters from Irish literature, theatre and film. This chapter addresses the possible impact of the long-standing pillars of representations exemplified by the likes of Shylock and Bloom, and how in particular Shylock continues to resonate as a touchstone for fictional Jewish representations in light of recent political scandal around antisemitism in the British Labour party. I discuss a number of depictions of the Irish-Jewish community and their possible negative impact when taken as a definitive portrait of Jewish identity.

2.1 Recycling Old Narratives

Stuart Hall, though predominantly concerned with media studies theory, advises that the function of systems of visual representation in (but not exclusive to) artforms such as theatre usually include descriptions and depictions of a subject, or the symbolising of it, so as to reconnect meaning and language to culture (1997, p.3). He identifies three modes of representation that in his opinion are the most frequently occurring in visual media – reflective, intentional and constructionist. The first, the reflective mode, serves to *reflect* existing meaning back to the world. In other words, that true or authentic meaning of something exists in reality and can be reproduced or *represented* in the mind of the audience. The Realism movement in theatre parallels Hall's reflective mode as its aim was to be a facsimile of real life, employing naturalistic as opposed to heightened language and the replication of normal human behaviours by the actors. However according to Lehmann, realist theatre perpetuates negative preconceptions because it is representing the subject as real, authentic, definitive. He cautions:

> Feminist theory, queer theory and postcolonial theatre scholarship, as well as the more recent analyses of disability and performance and age and performance, have all pointed out that performance has the power to question and destabilize the spectator's construction of identity and the 'other' – more so that realist mimetic drama, which remains caught in representation and thus often produces prevailing ideologies.
>
> (Lehmann 2006, p.6)

The theatre may have some atoning to do then, as a result of having helped originate confused and negative representations of the Jew since at least the Middle Ages, and having made limited efforts to recast the Jew as anything other than outsider and ultimate villain (this idea is discussed at length later in the chapter). In mediaeval times usury, or the practice of lending money, was forbidden amongst Christians, so Jews, who were not subject to this restriction, enabled the economic functioning of whatever society they found themselves in, sometimes gaining major social status amongst royalty in exchange for their fiscal services. This unique position caused much resentment amongst the Christian population, wary of these foreigners who could pull on the purse strings of ordinary people and heads of state alike. In her book *From Stereotype to Metaphor: the Jew in Contemporary Drama*, Ellen Schiff charts the appearance of Jewish characters in Western dramas from its earliest inception in the 1200s up to the late 20th century. Of the earliest known theatrical representations, Schiff says:

> The popularity of the Jew in mystery and morality plays can be attributed to the medieval taste effect juxtaposing extremes [...] The beauty of Christ against the impotent rage of those hostile to him.
>
> (1982, p.1)

The Old Testament despot Herod, and the New Testament traitor Judas, amongst other Biblical figures, provided ample material for the establishment of the Jew as untrustworthy foreigner on the passion wagon stages of Europe and in the hearts of all in Christendom. Oftentimes serving as the ludicrous foil – the butt of the joke for the pious Christian – the medieval stage Jew was also ridiculed and resented for the use of a foreign tongue. The impression given of Jews who "sound" Jewish, communicating as much through embodied gesture as through words, was anathema to European social sensibilities and further characterised the Jew as 'possessing all languages or no language of his or her own' (Gilman 1991, p.12), and was thus untrustworthy, unknowable, slippery. By contrast, Jewish female characters of the medieval stage (and later) were

widely portrayed as beautiful and desirable *in spite* of their grotesque paternity, and the inheritance of all the objectionable attributes accompanying a Jewish bloodline. Many plays from the era served as didactic moralities undermining the Jewish faith as inferior to Christianity, or featured storylines where the conversion of Jews to the true religion was the desired outcome (Schiff 1982, p.2). Schiff credits the early theatre with the creation and maintenance of negative representations of the Jew (reflecting back to society what it already believed to be true). She cites the evolution of this persona from everyday villain to ultimate anti-Christ through the imaginative power of theatrical presentation which by nature lifts the ordinary to the extraordinary (Ibid., p.6).

Christopher Marlowe's play, *The Jew of Malta*, written around 1589 put the Jewish villain centre stage for the first time in a play that raised serious moral objections to the unscrupulous dealings of the merchant classes, in particular the Jews. The play focuses on the scheming Barabas, a man of 'infinite riches' who despises his Christian neighbours:

> Who hateth me but for my happiness?
>
> Or who is honour'd now but for his wealth?
>
> Rather had I, a Jew, be hated thus,
>
> Than pitied in a Christian poverty;
>
> For I can see no fruits in all their faith,
>
> But malice, falsehood, and excessive pride
>
> (Marlowe 2013, Act I Sc.1)

Barabas' wealth is threatened by the invading Turks demanding financial tides from the people of Malta – the governor of the island has plans to extract the necessary funds solely from the island's Jewish population. When Barabas attempts to resist, a tirade of antisemitic attacks are launched against him. His fortune and goods are confiscated and his house is turned into a convent. Inspired by Machiavellian teachings, a vengeful Barabas sets out to destroy all those who have double-crossed him including his own daughter, whom he poisons along with her Christian lover and the convent full of nuns. After a series of bloody murders, betrayals and duplicities, justice is finally served when Barabas sets a trap of boiling water for one of his enemies but accidentally falls in and is refused mercy by the on-looking Christians. It is a complex, brutal and bloodthirsty plot,

perhaps the Tarantino of its day, and was inspired by real-life political events of the day. Holden suggests that the play (and a few years later Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*) was a response to the high-profile case of the Jewish doctor Roderigo Lopez in the Elizabethan court. At first the trusted physician to the nobility, and later Queen Elizabeth I herself, Lopez was executed most violently in 1594 on trumped-up charges of political intrigue (most likely as a result of becoming too close a confidant of the regent). The play was performed extensively during Lopez's period of detention and trial, both the subject and box-office demand for remountings of the piece reflecting the 'stereotypical Elizabethan attitudes to Jews' (Holden1999, p.145).

2.2 Shelving Shylock

A few years after the infamous Lopez case the first 'internalised hero villain' (Ibid.) emerged at a time when English anti-Jewish feeling remained at boiling-point in the aftermath of Lopez's execution. Shakespeare's Shylock (*The Merchant of Venice*), a moneylender and legal tactician, loans the Venetian merchant Antonio money on an impossible bond where should Antonio fail to repay the three thousand ducats, Shylock can instead redeem a pound of his flesh. The jeopardy of the play rests then with Antonio, who having lost his fortune must, it seems, succumb to the bond under the dictates of Venetian law. A court case brought forward by Shylock, intent on his remittance. But at the last minute, Portia (love interest of Antonio's best friend) disguises herself as a lawyer and introduces a legal loophole to the case. Shylock may have his pound of flesh as agreed but cannot spill one drop of Antonio's blood in the taking of it. Forced to concede to the impossibility of this loophole, Shylock is stripped of all his wealth as punishment for his vengefulness and forced to convert to Christianity so as to become decent in the eyes of civil society.

Shylock was my first encounter with a Jew on page or stage, save perhaps for Ron Moody's portrayal of Fagan in the 1968 musical *Oliver!* In the context of a Catholic school education in 1990s Ireland Shylock, the man, was something of a grey area – though he hath indeed eyes like the rest of us, opinion was often fudged as to whether Shylock represented real anti-Christian bloodlust. Or whether he was simply representing a (non-religious) idiosyncratic obsession with the doling out of jurisprudence. I understood – was made to understand – his case as one of temporary injustice *in spite* of

his Jewishness, and his difference as anathema to the Christian heroes and heroines of the piece. Any sympathies we might have felt towards the complexity of the character should dissolve as the plot unfolds and Shylock relentlessly and bitterly pursues his due process. This memory is of course conjecture on my part – I have no proof of the intent behind the interpretation of the character and story I was taught. I only have the memory that Shylock was perceived and delivered somehow differently, and that questions of otherness were rarely, if ever, taken up. It was impossible for me to conceptualise the representations in *HSWR* without reflecting on the fact that for many, Shylock is the only Jew they know and whether I had a responsibility to undo some of this theatrical residue.

As the infamous Jew of Venice, Shylock has been reimagined countless times since his first incarnation and continues to divide audiences and theatre makers on what are acceptable interpretations of this most contentious character. Scholars and biographers of Shakespeare remain divided as to his intentions for his representation of Jewishness. The famous "Hath not a Jew eyes" speech remains at the centre of these arguments for and against Shakespeare's attitudinal distancing from previous versions of the stage Jew. Whilst he may well have intended to paint a more nuanced portrait of religious intolerance than Marlowe through the various twists in Shylock's moral journey, it can hardly be said that *The Merchant of Venice* is the beacon of anti-bigotry that the likes of Holden might suggest it to be (1999, p. 221). Interestingly, an Irish man is credited as having transformed the accepted interpretations of the character from one-dimensional villain to complex human around the late 1700s. The pioneering Donegal actor Charles Macklin surprised London audiences in the 1740s with his version of Shylock, moving the character away from the 'crude anti-Semitic stereotype' that had dominated performances until then (O'Toole 2002, para.20). It's possible that Macklin (his stage name derived from the Irish, McLoughlin) felt akin to fellow outsider Shylock as an Irish man in Georgian London. Macklin's unique outsider perspective no doubt infused a more graded expression of Shylock the man to interpretations past. Perhaps this Irishman's version of the role paved the way for deeper examinations of minority immigrant experience in a homogenous society over time.

Prior claims that as a result of the innumerable and continuing re-imaginings of Shylock, an unbiased response to the play is now impossible. He states that '(m)ost people, before ever they experience the play in reading or performance, have already come across "the pound of flesh" as a proverbial expression and Shylock as a synonym for a cunning and

heartless creditor' (1981, p.479). The image of the grasping Jewish moneylender served as the reference point for overt and covert European xenophobia from Shylock's inception. This hook-nosed, money-lending and vengeful Jew could be lifted straight from the pages of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*[18] and eventually became the central icon for antisemitic Nazi propaganda. Third Reich Shylocks were stock *figuren*; grotesque, bent and contorted by the weight of their wallets. Each devolving depiction required little explaining for disenfranchised citizens of post-World War I Germany. But the Holocaust and the near-total annihilation of European Jewry meant that, post-war, the prevailing opinion was that once previously accepted representations of Jewish identity were no longer acceptable and would have to be committed to the ashes of Auschwitz, Sobibor, Chelmno, et al. After the Holocaust, traditional renderings of Shylock as comic menace were viewed as to 'horrific displays of religious insensitivity (Horowitz 2007, p.15). Contemporary re-imaginings of Shylock are now underscored by guilt and controversy; and they are;

> […] receptable [sic] for innumerable ethnic, religious and political corrections, adaptations and emendations – subversions and provocations – with adaptors and directors willfully mandating their own standards of positivity and negativity.
>
> (Ibid., p.8)

In the decades following Hitler's Final Solution the task of reinterpreting Shylock fell to European-Jewish and Israeli directors and theatre companies whose voices had rarely been heard in preceding Shylock discourses. Famously the play was once performed *as if* in the Theresienstadt concentration camp in the 1966, under the direction of Hungarian-Jew and Holocaust survivor George Tabori. Tabori made Holocaust representation something of his life's work as a means of readjusting the post-war sensibilities to reflect a post-traumatic age, 'in which the individual and the collective were considered psychologically affected or wounded and in need of healing' from the beyond comprehendible (Diedrich 2011, p.142). In his production of *The Merchant*, inspired by

[18] *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* was a fraudulent document of 24 alleged meetings held at the time of the first Zionist Congress in Switzerland in 1897. Jews and Freemasons were purported to have made plans to undo the dominance of Christian civilization through Liberalist and Socialist means, and to put in place instead a worldwide state jointly run by both groups. If these plans were to fail Europe's capital cities were to be sabotaged by all means necessary. The document, first printed in Russia and used throughout the 20th century as antisemitic propaganda, is unequivocally renounced as fake by all reputable sources.

the play-within-a-play work of Peter Brook, the actors were cast as inmates in the camp and forced to perform Shakespeare's story for an audience of Nazi prison guards. It was perhaps the first production to recontextualise Shakespeare against such a controversial *mise-en-scène* and was met with disgust and anger from attending audiences. Tabori went to produce another later variation of the theme, *I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear: Improvisations on Shakespeare's Shylock,* framed as collective therapy work and an attempt to come to terms with the own trauma that lingered in post-war (West) Germany, and his personal struggles as a Holocaust survivor (Ibid.).

Twenty first century Shylocks play out against renewed social and political controversy. Europe is once again haunted by rising antisemitism, as highlighted in the Paris attacks of 2015 when five people were killed during a targeted siege at a kosher supermarket in a Jewish area of the city. The numbers of cemetery desecrations at Jewish burial sites across France has risen dramatically in the ensuing years (Nossiter 2019). Both France and Germany have reported a sharp and alarming increase in the number of antisemitic attacks reported to the authorities (Henley 2019), whilst elsewhere in Europe overtly fascist-leaning ideologies have made a popular comeback in regions already groaning under the pressures of mass migrations from the Middle East and North Africa. It may also be speculated that further destabilisation of the post-war European commitment to unity, and no doubt contributing to increasingly insular and closed-off politics and social opinion, is visible in the diplomatic mayhem of the Brexit negotiations between Britain and the European Union. Amidst a national identity crisis between pro-Leave and pro-Remain voters, was rising xenophobia promoted by ultra-conservative parties such as UKIP. The British Labour party was put under investigation following accusations from 2015 to date of escalating internal antisemitic attitudes. An official investigation in 2016 ruled that whilst the party appeared to perpetuate negative attitudes that should be tackled formally, no substantive cases of antisemitism would proceed. One party member was expelled for anti-Jewish rhetoric, and the shadow minister for Brexit, Lady Dianne Hayter, was sacked as a result of referencing Nazism in a parliamentary speech with respect to party politics and Jeremy Corbyn's leadership (Weich 2019).

The matter escalated further when whistleblower Louise Withers-Green, who had worked for the party's internal investigations body the National Constitutional Committee (NCC), along with seven of her former colleagues formally accused Jeremy Corbyn's administration of institutional antisemitism, from the lower to upper echelons of the party

(Elgot 2019). These accusations ranged from British-Jewish members of the party being accused of pro-Israeli sympathies, to throwaway remarks by party members about the Holocaust, to a lack of enforcement of proper procedural codes in relation to internal complaints of antisemitic behaviour, and lastly to attempts by senior party aides to influence the outcomes of formal panel inquiries into antisemitisms. Several of the ex-party informants, predominantly non-Jewish, requested to be released from their contracts early citing mental health issues (in some cases suicidal ideation) as a direct result of the abuses they encountered at the NCC and their inability to change the attitudinal culture from within the party. Since Jeremy Corbyn's appointment as party head in 2015, the Labour Party has responded vehemently against these accusations. Corbyn himself made a taped address to both the public and members stating emphatically that the prevailing outlook of the party has not deviated from one of equality and anti-racism (BBC 2019).[19]

In 2015, at the beginning of Labour's troubles and global expressions of xenophobia, The Globe theatre in London20 announced its summer season to include a new production of The Merchant of Venice, starring celebrated Hollywood actor Jonathan Pryce as Shylock, in what was billed to be a subtle but impactful re-thinking at Shakespeare's original playhouse. Instead of maintaining the precedence of Shylock as a reviled and grasping opportunist, this production redrew the roles, casting his Christian adversaries as the true villains of the piece and surprising both critics and audiences alike despite the guise of a traditional Elizabethan staging of the play. This Shylock, upright, forthright, and wearing the customary red hat of Venetian Jews in the 1600s (a legal requirement) exchanged private and intimate snatches of Yiddish with his daughter Jessica. Though not the first time Yiddish had been used in representations of Shylock, the consensus seems to be that this production displayed a new departure in intended impact of the use of the language. It also appears to have been one of the only productions that actually stages Shylock's forced conversion to Christianity, during which Jessica sings a solemn kaddish (the

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[19] I have chosen not to cite the myriad of newspaper and online articles and opinion pieces on the Labour Party antisemitism accusations as they currently number in thousands. Instead, I will cite a reliable source that provided concise guides to the ongoing story at the time of writing: https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-45030552.

[20] The Globe theatre is a reconstruction of Shakespeare's original Elizabethan playhouse where the bulk of his work was first staged. It is regarded as the foremost theatre for work from this era, and as an education and research centre around the life and work of William Shakespeare.

Hebrew mourning prayer), usually only sung for the deceased. In her 2016 review of the American tour of the production, Guardian theatre critic Emma Brockes commented on Pryce's performance;

> [...] his Shylock, stoop-shouldered and by turns cowering and full of a frothing bravado, rescued the role from being a "comment" on race [...] Sympathy for Shylock has waxed and waned over the centuries and he is now firmly regarded as a character more sinned against than sinning.
>
> (2016, para. 8)

Though *Here Shall We Rest* does not include specific references to Shylock, he remains an important theatrical touchstone in the representation of Jewish identity. For many audiences he is perhaps the first (or only) Jewish character they have ever met, and remains relevant given current political anxieties around antisemitism as described here, and wider discourses on the portrayal of minority culture dominant hegemonies.

2.3 Page Oyrish

In 2016, a collaborative exhibition between Ulster University and the National University of Ireland entitled *Representations of Jews in Irish Literature* set out to document the extent of the portrayal of Jews from ancient to contemporary Irish literary sources. A selection of Irish and Irish-Jewish accounts from oral traditions, prose, drama and poetry were compiled, examining the relationship between the Jews and Ireland and the prejudices of writers who may or may not have had any real engagement with Jewish communities at home or abroad. In a recorded lecture accompanying the exhibition, Dr Ríóna Ní Fhrighil samples a number of items from the exhibition for general contextual analysis.[21] Most interestingly in relation to this research is Ní Rigil's in depth look at the accounts of Jews in the oral tradition from the National Folklore Collection. This enormous national study was completed in the 1930s and of some 500,000 index cards in the collection, only twenty-three of these match a search for stories relating to Jews or Jewish identity. Some of the stories catalogued include the likes of, *The Jewman and the House of Gold; The reason the Jews have the gift of money; Daniel O'Connell and the Jew; The Son of God turns the Jew into a pig.* Though there is some acknowledgement

[21] I only became aware of this exhibition after its display date. I requested further information from the Royal Irish Academy, but unfortunately there was no accompanying catalogue.

that a number of these stories were brought home from the New World where racial tensions between minority migrant communities was most prevalent, most seem to comply with universal racial stereotypes of Jews, both physical and idiosyncratic (Ní Fhrighil 2016, 00:12:17). However, because of the multivalent nature of the oral history medium, Ní Fhrighil stresses the importance of influence of the physical gestures of the teller, their facial expressions and intonation and how these may have been an influencing factor on the where the audience's sympathies ultimately came to rest. The teller may have indeed been an antisemite, or equally anti-clerical, or perhaps completely ambivalent to the parties involved as some accounts testify. The famous Irish author and *seanachai* Peig Sayers contributed one such story to the collection called, *The Jew who converted to Christianity.* It tells the story of a Jewish businessman who, on account of economic woes, converts to his wife's Catholicism in an attempt to rescue his fortunes. When reprimanded by the priest for eating meat on a Friday the Jewish man replies:

> If the outside of me was Catholic, the inside wasn't. I can no more make a fish out of a turkey by pouring water on it, than you can make a Catholic out of me by pouring water on my head. My heart is with my own people and will remain so.
>
> (Ní Fhrighil 2016, 00:7:18)

Not only does this example tally with the typecasting of Jews as scheming and duplicitous in nature, it also speaks to constructed notions of the authenticity of one's identity being based solely on religious beliefs. The Jewish character at the centre of this story may well have been disingenuous in his conversion, that we cannot say. But certainly, the innateness of his cultural heritage remains strong, and so the man finds himself trapped in the liminal space of is/isn't. Further problematics of hybrid identities are raised in some of the literary sources included in the exhibition. A line from the 1968 Irish language novel, *An Uain Bheo,* which centres around the fictional life of Irish-Jewish youth Louis Stein, affirms that, 'there is a touch of other in him' (Ní Fhrighil 2016, 00:26:38)[22] Indeed Stein's story reflects the recurring narrative of intergenerational tensions experienced by many immigrant families. Whereas first generation immigrants usually identify in a very real way with their culture of origin, the children of these first immigrants, having no experience of a previous life elsewhere, sometimes struggle to feel at home in their old or new cultural heritages.

[22] No English translation could be sourced at the time this research was conducted.

2.4 Killing Bloom

It is difficult to find fresh stepping off points for conversations on fictional Irish-Jewish identity without the spectre of Leopold Bloom of *Ulysses* making an entrance at some point. Joyce's ersatz or "paper Jewish" protagonist, 'personifies "otherness" and hybridity *vis-a-vis* the construction(s) of 'Irishness"', and it is necessary to acknowledge some of the problems this character presents regarding authenticity, so as to move away from any staid archetypes he may present (Lentin 2002a, p.155). Despite Bloom's far-removed genealogical ties to the faith he remains possibly the most celebrated figure in Irish-Jewish fact or fiction – *Bloomsday* is celebrated in Joyce's honour on June 16th every year all over the world. A plethora of academic and other hypotheses of Joyce's Jewish Dublin (and therefore Bloom's Dublin-Jewishness) appear to reinforce a fascination with the idea that being Irish *and* Jewish is an unusual or exotic condition. All roads leading to Bloom have been well trodden before me, however it would be remiss to discount his significance in any discourse around Jewish representation, or to leave unquestioned the ways in which Joyce's representation of Jewish Ireland intersects with or deviates from contemporary leitmotifs of Jewish identity.

To begin in a back-to-front manner, in-keeping with Joycean modes of confusion, there are a number of convincing arguments surrounding what makes Bloom *not* Jewish. Firstly, those which are genealogical and physical. Leopold Bloom's ancestry casts him as the son of a Hungarian Jew who settled in Dublin in the late 1800s and converted to Protestantism on his marriage to an Irish Protestant girl. Bloom possesses none of the obvious physical attributes of a Jewish heritage – he is not circumcised, nor has he had a *bar mitzvah*. And as Judaism is passed down matrilineally, Bloom's ties to the creed are even further estranged as his mother was Protestant (though some sources speculate about a Jewish grandmother). Secondly, there is the problem of Bloom's marriage to Molly. Marriage out of the Jewish faith to a Catholic seems highly unlikely given the size of the Jewish community in Dublin in 1904 and their relatively recent arrival in the city in any significant number (O'Gráda 2004, p.22). Despite the documented infighting and schisms amongst the various Jewish enclaves in the city, disagreements were often mended or at least temporarily quelled through reconciliatory acts of marriage and births (Rivlin 2011;

Keogh 2002). (I have yet to come across an incidence of inter-faith marriage in the beginning twentieth century beyond the anecdotal, though I haven't studied marriage records of the time in any great detail.) O'Gráda quips that, combined with his own mixed heritage, Bloom's marriage to Molly would have been met with 'a rather cold welcome' in Dublin's Little Jerusalem, the locus of Jewish life at the time (2004, p.22). Language too plays a significant part in Bloom's Jewish authenticity. On the few occasions that Bloom is heard to utter smattering of either Yiddish or Hebrew, he invariably forgets, mumbles or malaprops the inference or invocation. Boyarin argues that language has always been an ethnic strategy of 'self-creation employed by diasporic Jewish communities as a way of preserving tradition and identity' (1992, p.xvii). It seems unlikely then that a recent male emigrant or first generation emigrant would so quickly have fallen out of parlance with the mother tongues spoken in the ritual and daily lives of this community.

Perhaps then there is authenticity to be found then in the socio-political leanings put forward by the novel? Much of *Ulysses* centres on Bloom's roundabout discourses with a number of the supporting characters. It seems strange that in all their ramblings on various topical subjects of the day, nothing is mentioned of the anti-Jewish boycott that took place in Limerick in January of 1904, even though the action of *Ulysses* unfolds over the course of June 16th 1904, a mere five months later. The resonances of Fr. Creagh's hate-speech during the Limerick episode and a number of other incidents of anti-Jewish intolerance would certainly have been fresh in the minds of a nervous Jewish community in other parts of the country, but Bloom seems impervious to them (O'Gráda 2004, p.20)**.** Lentin argues that this incident was a highly significant moment in Jewish/Irish relations at the time. The minority Jews of Limerick proved easy scapegoats for wider intra-community tensions around poverty, classism and education (Lentin 2002a, p.155), so it seems unlikely that it would not loom large in the minds of Dublin Jews just a few months later. Turning then to the physical geography of the novel, what then suggests a meaningful connection between Bloom and the Dublin Jewish community to be found there? Bloom was purportedly born on Upper Clanbrassil Street – a breastplate hangs above the door of his fictional home place to this day. However, at that time there was no so-called Little Jerusalem in this area of Dublin, nor did that particular street ever form part of the Jewish heart of Dublin. Instead the new Litvak community settled in and around the South Circular Road, almost two kilometres away in the area referred to in all major sources as Little Jerusalem proper (O'Gráda 2004, p.22). This artistic license with

topography might seem like a minor discrepancy, but in a novel where the main conceptual premise relies on the detailed observations of ordinary Dublin (including its Jewish neighbourhoods), by a supposedly Jewish protagonist, this is a confounding inconsistency. In contrast, Bloom's credibility as Jewish, and by extension Irish-Jewish, is usually based on philosophical rather than factual argument. Many scholars put forward the notion that his journey is symbolic of that of the quintessential wandering Jew, 'typically represented as a male figure wandering through exile, doing penance for some act of wrongdoing' (Potok 1998, p.135). Bloom bounces around Dublin like a pinball, rarely coming to settle or give the impression of being settled, even in his own home, at any time. Lastly, there is the argument that in spite of disparities in physiology, geography or lineage, Bloom is emblematic of the vestigial Jew. His Jewishness is in keeping with postmodern sensibilities around the essence of Jewish identity (culture and tradition-based) contrary to the beliefs of, say, devout coreligionists. In many ways Bloom is more the quintessential representation of Modernity than Jewishness necessarily – his 'history, attitude, condition come to represent all of humanity in the twentieth century' therefore making it difficult to ascribe him to any fixed notions of cultural and religious identity (Levitt 2004, p.146).

Wynn argues that to focus on the minutiae of identity markers such as those discussed above is to miss the point of the novel – that Joyce intended to create a central character so complex and obtuse that he would defy categorisation by traditional literary standards (n.d., p.117). But that a pseudo-Jew like Bloom, with a religiously absurd background (including three Christian baptisms), should become the signpost for the Irish-Jewish experience is an offbeat choice as an anti-hero protagonist. According to O'Gráda, Bloom's literary makeup remains disputed (2004, p.17), while Hezser argues that Bloom's muddled ancestry 'was a testimony to Joyce's own outsider status within Irish society at the time when he wrote the book' (2005, p.159). More likely is the theory that Joyce then living in Trieste, far away from the back streets of inner city Dublin, conjured Bloom as a multi-layered commentary on a number of situations close to several events from his own life at the time. For example, the founder and leader of the Sinn Féin party, Arthur Griffith, notoriously infused the propaganda in his *United Irishmen* newspaper with 'rabid' and continued antisemitic opinion reflecting anti-Jewish hostilities in Dublin at the time (O'Riordan 1988, p.121). Coupled with this, Joyce's own experience of antisemitism at home and in Paris undoubtedly had an impact on the conceptualisation of Bloom (Keogh 2002, p.57). Perhaps, as Schiff claims, it was Joyce's obfuscation of

Jewish and Irish identity juxtaposed and fused in a revolutionary literary form achieving a synthesis of ‘silhouettes representative of the Old and New Testaments’ (1982, p.76). This literary blurring of boundaries such as this highlights shared experiences of cultural and political subjugation between the Irish and the Jews, and their struggle to found sovereign nation states. Killeen argues that Zionist cause was for many a ‘local and obscure’ idol, a notion which fulfilled their destiny as the true and chosen people. He continues, ‘such, it is implied, might well be the destiny of the Irish if they too remain true to their culture and beliefs’ in the struggle against British domination (2003, para.2). Bloom’s prophetic function, a Jew amidst the Irish, is perhaps to be taken then as more of a cautionary tale for early 20th century Irish Nationalists, rather than a commentary on the authenticity or ownership of any cultural experience.

2.5 Stage Oyrish

Playography Ireland (www.irishplayography.com) is the largest database of professional Irish theatre work produced since 1904. Though not a definitive list of Irish-made work, it is possible to search the database for broad thematic subjects. In a search of the terms “Jews” and “Jewish”, the database returned 13 plays matching these themes, all of which were either written by Irish playwrights or first produced in Irish venues. Of the 13 plays, six are set outside of the Republic of Ireland in either Belfast, where there was historically a large Jewish community, or in Israel. The oldest of the plays, *Sincerity* by Gerald McNamara, dates back to 1918 and appears to be a treatise on the merits of one faith over another (the text is no longer available but presumably one of the faiths in question is Judaism). That leaves an estimated total of seven plays that deal with the question, or related questions, of being Jewish in Ireland. This seems small, even for Ireland, given the much more substantive body of work in memoir and biography on the community.

Perhaps the most well-known Irish playwright who has dealt with the subject in two of his plays is Gavin Kostick. Kostick’s paternal grandparents were Jewish and settled in Dublin in the 1930s. His 1992 play, *The Ash Fire*, looks at the difficult assimilation of three newly-arrived Polish immigrants set in the north inner-city of his grandparents' time, and somewhat inspired by their story. The three Katzmeir brothers of the play each appear to embody divergent worldviews. Nat, the eldest brother, is devoutly religious with Zionist leanings; Rube appears to possess both a natural business acumen and a talent for

charm when he begins an affair with Cait, the Catholic daily woman; Abe is the family intellectual with a keen interest in socialism thanks to education by a local feminist revolutionary. The dramatic tension between the pull of tradition and the draw of modernity or acculturation builds to a claustrophobic climax between the three conflicting worldviews. The New York Times described a 1994 production of the play at the American Jewish Theater as 'melodramatic' and 'old-fashioned' (Brantley 1994), but Kostick himself has said of this and similar work that 'Ireland needed to think about the immigrant to Ireland' experience (2018, para.3). A story of love and atonement, Kostick's other Jewish-centric play, *This Is What We Sang* (2009), comprises five intersecting stories of Jewish life in Belfast that are all aired on the high holiday, Yom Kippur. The piece was first performed on site at the Somerton Road synagogue in North Belfast. The pseudo-testimony text interweaves personal reflections and fictional narrative that charts the history of the community in the city from the late 1880s to the present day. The play was intended as a companion piece to *The Ash Fire*, and as a means of examining the similarities and differences between the experience of Northern Irish Jews versus those in the Republic. Kostick is said to have been initially hesitant to revisit the theme of Jewish identity feeling something of a fraud as he freely admits to having moved away from Judaism and the cultural background throughout his life (2009, para.3). (Though the playwright grew up with a deep awareness of his familial heritage, he did not have a religious upbringing and does not practice Judaism by any traditional means). Something about his hesitancy resonated with me – I am not Jewish so I lack a certain innate cultural sensitivity perhaps. This therefore makes me wary of declaring myself an "expert' on Jewish experience. On the other hand, my deep and lasting encounters as an outsider in collaboration with the community, with Jewish studies and narratives, and with wider European Jewish history mean that I am uniquely placed to conduct this arts practice research in a singular space between being *not of* but *connected to.*

Occasional and interesting parallels are drawn between the canonical Irish and Yiddish theatre traditions, both of which emerged in the late 19th century as aspects of the pan-European wave of cultural enlightenment during the political re-education of the masses. In Ireland, the Abbey Theatre was founded by W.B. Yeats and Lady Gregory as a counter-voice to the English theatrical culture that had been the mainstream for centuries, replacing them with narratives of Irish concern for Irish people. Around the same time the man dubbed as the "Father of Yiddish Theatre", Abraham Goldfaden, was the first director to successfully develop a theatrical aestheticisation of Jewish life and custom, or

yidishkayt (Jewishness). The sustainability of his work meant that for the first time theatre was both accessible and acceptable as an expression of cultural-nationalism to Russian Jewry. This kind of work inspired S.Ansky and many of his contemporaries to develop ideologies of new Jewish nationalism (See Chapter 6.3 and 6.6). A number of stylistic similarities between the Irish and Yiddish theatre movements at this time are apparent – the self-deprecating humour; the reverence for supernatural and mythic traditions of the homeland; the shared histories of poverty and religious persecution; the portrayal of hard-working, asexual and subservient population; the influence of native languages on the authors of the plays through the unique phraseology of their characters. Where the two movements differed, however, was in the inclusion of other dramatic works from beyond their own cultural repertoires. Whilst Yiddish theatrical reps often included work by the famous English-speaking playwrights of the day, Irish plays were performed almost exclusively in English and dealt exclusively with Irish issues. For this reason, these plays were immediately available to be read or staged by wider audiences in England and America, whereas Yiddish works remained niche, geographically restrained and dependent on revival movements to elevate popularity.

That the Yiddish melodrama *Shulamith,* written by Goldfaden, was staged at the Abbey Theatre in 1908 some four years after the Limerick pogrom, does seem to have been a moment of some cultural incongruity. The staunchly nationalistic outlook of the Abbey's manifesto and that its founder members, as well as the fact that interaction between the Irish Catholic and Jewish communities was extremely limited in ordinary daily life made the staging of this particular play a surprising event (Ruppo Malone 2014, p.17). But there is some evidence that the Irish Revival was an inspiration to Jews who felt the same draw of cultural nationalism as the Irish intent on Home Rule at the very least. Interestingly, Ruppo Malone also cites a critique on the representation of "stage Jews" in Ireland at the time which said that these depictions were, 'particularly resonant […] in a country which seemed to its contemporaries to be "on the verge of a Renaissance" and whose playwrights aimed to combat the damaging stereotypes associated with the figure of the "stage Irishman"'(2014, p.20). Drawing inspiration from Irish successes, Yiddish playwrights began to realise that by translating their works into English these stories too could be brought beyond the dialect-dependant audiences and the local successes it had enjoyed, and into the serious literary circles that this new Irish theatre was moving in all over the Western world.

On contemporary Jewish representations on the Irish stage, I also wish to note briefly a play first produced in Limerick, given its geographical and thematic proximity to this research. The play was first produced by the now defunct Island Theatre Co., founded in the 1990s in Limerick city as a production hub for new plays from the region. Set on the evening of December 31st 1999, Mike Finn's *Pigtown* – the local nickname for Limerick city owing to its famous bacon industry – is a kind of space-time chronicle of one hundred years of Limerick's history. The action takes place in and around the wake of local character Tommy "Clocks" Clohessy. The audience learns that Tommy Clocks was a butcher in the heart of the city and his ghost acts as a guide on an episodic wandering tour of this city full of biographies. Tommy begins:

> ***Lotta stories in this town. This town. This old, bold, cold town. This big town. This pig town. Every house a story.***
>
> (Finn 1999, p.4)

Amongst other moments, Tommy recalls the anarchy of the trade unions during the Limerick Soviet of 1919, the day-to-day of the ordinary factory workers in the illustrious bacon industry in the 1930s, and the inner city children from a rose-tinted trip to the 1970s. Glib references are made along the way to the rumour that the Tzar in St. Petersburg once called upon the expertise of Limerick butchers, such was their international renown. The piece was originally produced as a large-scale promenade work with the various vignettes, not always interconnected, taking place dramatically up and down the length of the city centre at several different locations. At one location, described in the stage directions as 'a grotty hotel in the 1930s', the audience is introduced to Elsa Reininger, described as a glamourous, dark-haired and middle-aged woman in an expensive evening gown and clearly of means. She clutches a gun as a stream of blood trails from her head down the front of her dress. In keeping with the illogic at the heart of the play, the audience have stumbled upon Elsa in the immediate moments after her suicide. She recounts the details of her elegant former life in Vienna – a life of maids, dinners and waltzing that she was forced to leave behind. When the Nazis invaded, her husband was forced out of business and their home burned down. She explains that her daughter lives in Limerick on nearby Wolfe Tone St. where at one time, she says, there were two synagogues. But the remnants of a chequered Jewish history have made Limerick a cold and alien place to this new arrival, and a vexed Elsa remarks:

> ***Vot is my home?...The map changes like a table being set and set again for tea… And so, here ve are come. Mit nothing. Limerick. A town full of pork. (She lets out a little laugh.) So different. Here, sex is verboten. It might lead to valtzing!***
>
> (Ibid., p.38)

It seems Elsa finds herself adrift everywhere in the unkind world of the 1930s, and in the unfamiliar social step-down of the very Catholic city. The details of her ordeals are only briefly surmised but she alludes to widespread Catholic intolerance. Gesturing to a crucifix on the wall behind her she departs the audience with the lines:

> ***I did not do dis to your Jesus (With great pride.) Elsa Reininger killed nobody. (Pause) Until tonight.***
>
> (Ibid.)

Elsa's moment is brief amongst the other fleeting ghosts in Tommy's memory. At one short monologue's length, she melts back into the social fabric of this Limerick as quickly as she appeared. But her presence amongst the company of *Pigtown's* characters serves two purposes. The first is to acknowledge the story of the real Elsa Reininger, a refugee from the unfriendly Europe of the 1930s who is buried in the tiny Jewish cemetery on the outskirts of Limerick. Fleeing annexed Austria, she lived with her daughter for a time in the city, but committed suicide a couple of years after her arrival. As is customary in Jewish burial for those who die by suicide, hers is believed to be an unmarked grave at the perimeter of the graveyard simply marked today as the resting place of an "unknown soul". The character's second function is as an allusion by the playwright to the darker and more complex aspects of Limerick's Jewish history, namely the pogrom or boycott as disputed, depending on the source. By signposting the earlier Limerick incident through Elsa's presence, Finn draws a potent thread between that uncomfortable past and the persecution of the Jews in Europe that drove the real Elsa from her home.

But this depiction of Jewry in Ireland is not without issue. Firstly, the character is written in the script as heavily accented - all her w's are replaced with v's and her parlance is that of someone whose first language is not English and who may well have encountered many

other dialects along the way. Not only do the stage directions indicate that though Elsa is Viennese she is written with an Eastern European accent, and the prose itself drives this trait on to its farthest inception. Without having seen the play, this particular detail leaps unabashedly off the page as a further concretising of the two-dimensional representations of Jewish characters familiar and accepted in Irish theatre. As an actor this textual detail, however minor, feels outdated for a contemporary work even if the first inception of this play was over twenty years ago. The phonetic differences between the Austrian and Eastern European accents indicated in the text are many and this inscribed detail may have profound implications on the semiotic reception of Elsa's narrative. This broad stroke approach to the character, who only has a few brief moments to establish her entire back story based on a real story, feels like an arbitrary decision made by central casting. It is my belief that audiences are attuned to more subtle references than we might credit them for. Of course, many authors write characters in accent (vernacular is a different trope), but this choice is not the most progressive way to approach representation of the supposed stranger. This detail over-Others the character to the point of reinforcing and endorsing assumptions. Of course she had an accent, vastly different to those heard on the streets of her adoptive home, but I question whether it needed to be dictated through phonetic markers such as these. Perhaps the portrait of Elsa in *Pigtown* is being used as a kind of touch paper to other histories that that play could not include (it was already an enormous immersive piece, and my actor self is still considering the ways I might have approached this text as is.

With regard to cinema, I am only aware of one representation of Irish-Jewish life from popular Irish cinema in the 1971 film adaptation of Walter Makin's novel for children, *Flight of the Doves.* The film applies heavy layers of paddywhackery to a somewhat thin family drama, but the inclusion of an Irish-Jewish character is notable, if only as an exception to prevailing interpretations of what constitutes Irishness. Two Liverpudlian orphans make a desperate bid to escape a wicked stepfather in England for the sanctuary of an estranged grandmother in Co. Galway. Their journey across Ireland is a difficult one – unaware that they are heirs to their grandfather's estate, their money-grabbing, failed actor uncle joins forces with their stepfather in bid to catch the children and change the course of the inheritance. Arriving in Dublin on the morning of St. Patrick's Day, the hungry strays pocket two pork pies from a stallholder in the market and are given chase by an archetypal hapless Irish garda. Pockets full of non-kosher meat the children stumble into a synagogue at the Ha'penny Bridge where a song-filled *sabbath* service is in full

swing. A male quorum led by a cantor sings the worship to a full congregation in the balcony. The garda bursts into the service and removes his cap in the Catholic tradition but is instructed disapprovingly by the rabbi to put his hat back on in this particular house of worship. The rabbi "plays dumb" to the presence of the children in the synagogue and he escorts the garda off the premises and back into the bustling streets of Dublin. The good-humoured and caring "priest" (says the little girl emphatically) then doles out some pseudo-Talmudic wisdom to the runaways in his gentle south Dublin accent, and there follows a slapstick rouse where the children are dressed up as a teetering orthodox Jew complete with brimmed black hat and long coat. Together they sneak past the unsuspecting garda and all three are swept up into the bustle of the passing St. Patrick's Day parade. A rousing rendition of an alternative anthem for Ireland ensues with the chorus, "You don't have to be Irish to be Irish", and the rabbi leads a multi-ethnic all-singing, all-dancing delegation through the Phoenix Park.[23] It is the stuff of Guinness-induced, leprechaun-coloured dreams and at times it is hard to discern who it might cause most offense to!

I was unable to locate any existing critical analyses of the film, but there are for me a number of elements that make this sequence with the Irish rabbi interesting. The role is played by the late distinguished Irish actor Noel Purcell. Purcell grew up on Dublin's South Circular Road in the 1920s, which at the time was the heart of Jewish immigrant Ireland which was in the height of its populace. Presumably, the young Purcell was exposed to something of an alternative world in his childhood surroundings and witnessed a way of daily life that was totally outside the familiarity of his Catholic upbringing. Purcell's early career was fostered by the Dublin Jewish man and entertainment magnate Louis Ellimen, owner of The Gaiety Theatre and founder of Ireland's famous Ardmore film studios. These factors undoubtedly had some bearing on his several performances as a rabbi which earned him the nickname "The Dublin Rabbi" in Hollywood circles. Notwithstanding all this, Purcell also possessed the stereotypical attributes of Jewishness that had previously accompanied film and theatrical representations – bushy hair, prominent nose, wise-looking and sallow. In short, Purcell fitted the bill for audiences who might have expected certain physical attributes to exemplify a typically Jewish character rather than a look that was stereotypically Irish.

[23] A clip is available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jAQl64syDTg

Figure 3 (2.5): Noel Purcell as the rabbi (*Flight of the Doves,* 1971)

Purcell's rabbi is caring and understanding, but uses his wiles to evade authority in a harmless and witty manner. A particular sticking point akin to the geographical discrepancies of Jewish Dublin in *Ulysses*, is the fictional positioning of a synagogue at the location of one of Dublin's most famous tourist sites, the Ha'Penny Bridge. With even the vaguest knowledge of one or both of the locations used for the synagogue, the utter implausibility of combining two locations to make them read as one is evident. We see the children enter the pokey door of the synagogue on a side street in Dublin's inner city and exit through the leafy yard of one of the much bigger suburban synagogues of presumably Terenure or possibly Adelaide Road. It's a bizarre choice both editorially and symbolically, and precisely the kind of skewing of the facts that some could argue is indicative of the furthering of misinformation around the Jewish community in Ireland. Perhaps the director, Frank Gabrielson, drew from Joyce's haphazard sketching of the Jewish inner city 'for clues as to the Dublin experience' (Clarke 2019, para. 9), or the interpretation of the Ireland of his film is intent on pushing an intercultural discourse regardless of authenticity. Though a minute detail of artistic license, I can't help but feel that it rings of a certain carelessness in portrayal – something I was intent on avoiding in my own work for fear of perpetuating stereotypes and misinformation. I can't help but wonder whether the editing together of locations in so fictional a manner must have been a great source of amusement to the extras who make up the scene and who appear to be actual members of the Dublin Jewish community.

Humorously dubbed a shining example of "Micksploitation", the film was recently praised for its 'startling inclusiveness' some forty years on. Shown on national television every St. Patrick's day this romanticised variation of Ireland is flavoured with 'an

ecumenical warmth rare in contemporaneous representations' (Clarke 2019, para. 8). For me this representation of Jewish Ireland and the wider inference of seamless multiculturalism does not reflect the Ireland of almost forty years ago that I recall. In that Ireland I rarely witnessed or heard of celebrations of inclusivity. That Ireland was still very much an inward-looking state of fear; one of reverence to religion and authority and suspicion of the unknown. As the earliest representation of Jewish life that I can recall, I must then ask whether the neglectful ambivalence for facts displayed in this film (and elsewhere) can have a cumulative effect or give weight and continued stereotype? In shortcutting the quest for authenticity in our artistry, or a third voice that accommodates all within, do we as makers and interpreters inadvertently continue to subordinate the subject? McIvor and Spangler suggest that, counter-intuitively, representations of outsiderness continues to narrow, despite the expansion of the definition of Irish identity amongst the population, thus leading to increased '[…] tensions between outward and inward Irishness' (2014, p.xv). Does our approach remain one of, "It's grand; the facts don't really matter because, well, your story doesn't really matter…"

I conclude this chapter by casting a thought back to Hall's (1997) two other modes of representation as he defined them. Firstly, *intentional* representation – where the work presents the artist's intended meaning. Secondly, *constructional* representation – where meaning is created through the language used. It seems that in the context of this work as practice research, and the use of verbatim and found texts, these two modes perhaps sit equally closely with the research objectives at play here – that is the retelling (reflection) of Jewish stories (construction) for the stage by a non-Jewish person, for a predominantly non-Jewish audience (intention). *Intentionally* my creative and editorial voices were a constant presence in the making and performing processes. I constructed a new understanding of this heritage through the dialogic processes of interview, and then performance. If representations of outsiders on the Irish stage and screen have contracted to counter the expanding multicultural population (McIvor and Spangler 2014, p.xv), then Fine offers guidelines on furthering ethical work and representations regarding these kinds of identity politics, and counter the contraction of these stories and representations. We must ask, and then ask again 'whose story is being told, why, to whom, with what interpretation, and whose story is being shadowed, why, for whom, and with what consequence' (Fine 1994, p.73).

Chapter 3: The Box Marked "Other"

This chapter serves as a theoretical backdrop to the core motivation behind this research. That is, examining accepted narratives around Jewish identity with the purpose of interrogating and reimagining some of the pre-existing and often negative representations through a new work for theatre. Some theoretical concepts around Others are looked at in the context of Irish and Jewish identity and overall identity formation for certain social groups. These ideas are included as a partial response to concerns about representation in my work, both my own and those brought to my attention. Research such as this, undertaken by a cultural outsider to this labyrinthine and loaded identity, could in fact contribute to the further Othering of a minority community through the very naming of it as such. Here, I investigate some of the ways in which theoretical notions of Other pertain to Jewish identity to contextualise this research and this aspect of my interest in the field. I will also examine possible wider research implications regarding practice and theatre-making processes in undertaking thematically similar work.

3.1 Defining Other

The desire for humans to self-define and identify with others is commonly referred to as "socialisation". Appeasing our most primordial instincts, we categorise ourselves in terms of those with whom we deem to have something in common versus those with whom we do not. By creating these delineations of "us" and "them" hierarchical modes of socialisation perpetuate amongst members of a particular society, class, race, ethnic or

gender groups into familiar and Other (Ní Éigeartaigh 2010, p.118).[24] Fine determines the nature of Other thus – '[t]he Other requires the fixing of an Other in order for the self to be constituted' (1994, p.72). The roots of the concept of Othering are drawn from a number of pre-dating philosophical traditions (such as Hegel, as discussed in this chapter). It is surely of little coincidence that the formal theories of Othering from thinkers like Emmanuel Levinas, Simone De Beauvoir and Others emerged from one of mankind's darkest moments of ethical reckoning; the aftermath of the Holocaust. At that juncture, modern understanding of the human psyche was in turmoil – Hannah Arendt and her contemporaries worked relentlessly to help society understand and come to terms with the "banality of evil" and the scale and potential of man's inhumanity (1963). Ethics and morality were framed and reframed in the aftermath of the inconceivable horrors of the death camps by the traumatised generations left behind. Twentieth century interpretations of Other had previously been influenced by the early Hegelian roots of the notion in his famous master-slave dialectic or, *The Phenomenology of the Spirit* (2018). In brief, Hegel reasoned that when two self-conscious wholes encounter each other, and are therein confronted with both the familiar (Self) and strange (Other), a power struggle of one over the other invariably unfolds. The basis of Hegel's idea was influenced by the socio-political and historical power struggles of the European feudal landlord/serf system of the Middle Ages, but the master / slave relationship was also later interpreted by some as the internal struggle of one individual over their own self-consciousness.

The long-term implications of Hegel's theory were far reaching in the fields of psychology, philosophy and the self-evolved in contemporary thinking. A similar idea that 'in its encounter with the Other, self-consciousness sees that Other as both self and

[24] Here I offer a working definition of Other in the context of this overall research proposal: that the notion of Other pertains to a second subject which is considered an exception to, or outside of, or unequal to the societal or cultural self-defined norms. This includes any instance where distancing is experienced by a particular group on the grounds of exclusivity (or lack thereof), perceived inferiority (e.g. economic, intellectual, religious, cultural, sexuality and gender biases), or of being unknowably different to the cultural majority. Otherness is therefore the social situatedness of particular peoples, and negative attitudes that prevail towards places or cultures as expressed through racism, eurocentrism, antisemitism and other overt forms of social distancing. This operational understanding of the notion of Other is influenced by key theorists in the field as discussed in this chapter and by work of Derrida and Levinas as discussed in Chapter 4. It has also been formed as a result of complimentary key readings such as the colonial West/East dichotomy (simply put, civilisation versus primitivism) as outlined in Said's *Orientalism* (1995) and *Culture & Imperialism* (1994).

not-self' underlies colonial systems of power (Brons 2015, p.69). Drawing from Edward Said, '[c]olonialism is manifested through the "configurations of power" that worked and still work to control indigenous lands and populations' (Weenie, 2000, p. 65). As countries began to reclaim independence from imperial rule throughout the Twentieth century, the notion of Other was also used by postcolonial thinkers involved in tumultuous processes of self-examination and self-reimagination. If 'Othering helps to define the self and affirm identity', its general implications have also been used to define not-self and not-identity (Lister 2004, p.102).

At the core of the notion of Othering is the implication of inequity between persons or groups. These perceived differences may be as a result of a number of influencing factors including: the idea that there is a definitive Self to begin with; collective agreement on the '(un)desirable characteristics' of the proposed other, and the 'self-other-identifying assumption', where the other identifies itself or outs itself as different (Brons 2015, p. 70). A breakdown of Brons' definition of Othering applies combinations of these conditions as per the diagram below, depending on the context:

Table 1: Two dimensions of othering

othering: crude *vs.* sophisticated	the other: inferior *vs.* radically alien
crude	inferior other (and superior self)
crude, but originally sophisticated	radically alien other
apparently crude, but really sophisticated	*both* inferior and radically alien
sophisticated	

Figure 4 (3.1): Two dimensions of othering (Brons)

'Crude Othering' occurs where undesirability or differentiation is assumed, whilst 'Sophisticated Othering' can be partially based on the idea that, 'what's true for the self is true for the encountered other as well' (Brons 2015, p.71). Likewise, Othering can also be the branding of the Other as inferior based on pre-existing or newly determined biases. It can also take the form of the complete dehumanization of the other as the "radically alien", but not necessarily inferior (Ibid.,p.70). Looking at antisemitic propaganda from

the 1930s and ‘40s we can see many permutations of the conditions above at play, at various stages of the Nazi campaign. Brons’ table is a more intricate breakdown of the basic structures of active, passive and strategic Othering. The approach is in agreement with Jensen’s evaluation of the general characteristics of Othering where the ability to construct identity lies solely with the more powerful dominant: self alone, or self in relation to Other (2011, p.63).

3.2 Jewish as Other

Brons’ typology represents just one of the many interpretations of the conditions of Othering. More recent interpretations are also offered through the lenses of gendered or cultural distancing (Sisson Runyan and Spike Peterson, 2018, p.62). In the case of this research, the lens through which notions of Othering are viewed is one of Jewish identity studies. Schiff claims that ‘Jewish stock figures who are alienated, victimized or wandering have come to represent contemporary myths restricted neither to literary stereotypes nor to Jews’ (1982, p.95). Assertions like this affirm that the notion of the Jew as subordinate Other is an age-old and far-reaching concept – that is, as a person or group who is ranked by the dominant cultural empiricism as both below and outside of. Gilman concludes that misconceptions of the Jew as foreign, as victim, as wealthy and cosmopolitan can ultimately be reduced to one simple question; ‘Are Jews inherently different?’ (2003, p.171). These and similar assumptions presented themselves throughout my creative process, provoking tense internal and external debates for me on a number of occasions, particularly as a non-Jewish person. By making this play might I inadvertently reinforce theatrical or fictionalised stereotypes and misinformation? Equally not making the play, given my unique position, would do nothing to reverse these assumptions elsewhere.

Parallels can be drawn between the established negative othering of Jews and feminist theories like those of Simone De Beauvoir and her existentialist examinations of female self-identification. Women, De Beauvoir argued, become conscious of and see their otherness because of its construction exclusively through the male gaze (Hughes & Witz 1997, pg.49). In her ground-breaking feminist work from 1949, *The Second Sex* (2009), De Beauvoir exposed the idea of women as outside the norm of the male world drawing on Hegel’s master-slave dialectic. Here she ‘universalizes a theory of self and other in

relation to both gender and other hierarchical social differences', asserting that women are only conscious of their existence through lenses created by men (Jensen 2011, p.64). De Beauvoir's thesis echoes the idea that the Jew only becomes a Jew when looked at from the outside (Sicher 1991, p.3). Jean-Paul Sartre, himself a Jew, was the first to formally declare Jewish identity as 'defined from the outside, by others, an identity that cannot be shed' (Pinto 1996, p.6). Sartre's criticisms of French-Jewish identity were inextricably linked to a complex history of French antisemitism dating back to the Middle Ages as expressed in his 1944 work, *Anti-Semite and Jew*. In the late 1900s Franco-Judaism, in line with other nationalist movements of that era, espoused the assimilation of Jews into the wholly democratic ideology underlying the French Republic. Jews were expected to assimilate with French ideals in the public sphere and reserve the expression of their individualism (their Jewishness) for the privacy of home. However complete assimilation was deemed an impossibility as 'the Jew *qua* Jew was held to belong to the category of the unassimilable' (Schor 1999, p.109). Sartre claimed that this almost innate antisemitism renders assimilation impossible because the idea of a unified identity (universalism) into which the Jew might assimilate, has been pre-ordained through a Christian lens. The Jew is always excluded from this so therefore assimilation is impossible. Thus, according to Sartre, the Jew is perpetually Other. During his own lifetime, notorious events like the Dreyfuss affair [25], and the collaboration of the Vichy

[25] Between 1894 and 1906 the Dreyfus affair played out as one of the most notorious cases of public antisemitism in French judicial history. Captain Alfred Dreyfus, a wealthy Jewish Alsatian, was accused of collaborating with the Prussians on less than substantive evidence. Dreyfus was convicted to life imprisonment on Devil's Island, but his sentence was commuted to ten years following vocal campaigning by members of the public. Some high profile figures from the arts and intellectual worlds believed that Dreyfus was made a scapegoat as an untrustworthy Jew with connections to Germany. Dreyfus served seven of the ten year sentence whilst the scandal trundled on in the public eye and his military colleague Ferdinand Esterhazy (widely believed to have been the real culprit, but crucially non-Jewish) was tried and exonerated of the same crime. He eventually received a presidential pardon on account of public outcry and went on to serve as Major in the French military during WWI. The case is credited as having inspired the founder of modern Zionism, Theodor Herzl, in his cause to found a Jewish nation owing to its blatant antisemitism against the wider Franco-Jewish population symbolised by Dreyfus.

government with Nazi occupying forces[26] bolstered this claim that the Jew in French society would always remain outside the unified ideal of French identity.

While writers such as Sartre emphasised the manipulation of the subject through the external gaze, others noted the double othering that occurs when the external gaze is also embodied by the "Other". Late Twentieth century American author Margie Piercy amalgamates the double difference quandary that many experience of being both Jewish *and* female through her dystopian science fiction poetry and prose (Linkon 1994, p.95). Literary contemporary of second-wave feminist writers like Margaret Atwood, Piercy's later work centres on the question of Jewish identity, specifically female Jewish identity and how this manifests as both internal and external created or imposed struggles. In some cases Piercy expresses the idea of Jewishness as a peripheral thing. A minor detail to emphasise the Other of a character, or as an inherited trait to be reacted to but which is not necessarily central to the character's essence. On the other hand, the fluidity imposed either through self-definition as Jewish, or external definition as the same, poses a crisis of identity for more of her characters –

> How can I come to master, to own, that definition?… If I am to be myself, entire, authentic, I must find a way of being Jewish that is mine.
>
> (Piercy 1987, p.269)

During the American feminist and Reform Jewish[27] movements of this period many Jewish women often felt excluded from their spirituality and struggled to be both feminists and observant Jews. Part of the resolution of these tensions as outsiders in many scenarios was to be found in the recreation and rewriting of key Jewish texts and

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[26] From late 1942 the nominal French government of occupied France, based in Vichy, collaborated with the Nazis to assist in raids on Jewish homes and the rounding up of "undesirables". 15,000 citizenships were removed from French Jews, the mandatory wearing of yellow stars was introduced, and in March of that year the first transportations of French Jews to Nazi concentration camps began. The events of this collaboration have been widely documented.

[27] Reform Judaism (also Progressive, or Liberal) originated in 19th-century Germany and is now a major denomination of global Judaism. Part of its central philosophy is the prioritisation of personal ethics and morality over strict ritual observance. In the 1970's the movement adopted a outlook of inclusiveness, acceptance and multiculturalism, opening its doors to as broad a community of worshippers as possible. Reform is strongly linked to social agendas; many high profile Jews at the heart of the American Civil Rights movement of the 1960's were actively Progressive Jews.

mythologies, such as dybbuk narratives (Rubin 2005, p.10). Piercy herself defines Jewish identity, to a large extent, as one's connection with the Jewish people (ergo Jewish narratives) but crucially and always in relation to a non-Jewish world (Linkon 1994, p.103). Expressed as separate subjects by De Beauvoir and Sartre, the union of Jewish identity *and* female identity represented in Percy's later highlights the locus of open-ended Otherness, to oneself or to the outside world, that prevails for many regardless of time or location.

3.3 Post-colonial Othering

Othering theory accompanied the waves of post-colonial independence movements all over the world throughout the Twentieth century. There is some usefulness in considering aspects of Irish post-colonial discourse with reference to this study as, 'understandings of nation, self and other […] are central to the concepts of identity' (Finneran 2009, p.289). How do ideologies of nation, Self and Other pertain to accurate or inaccurate understanding and representation of minority communities?

> But who or what *is* "Irish"? What defines Irishness? Is it Irish blood? […] Is it residence in Ireland? […] And who gets to say what qualifies as genuinely Irish?
>
> (Cheng 2000, p.240)

Through its very punctuation the term postcolonial acknowledges the breaking point between colonial rule and influence by the occupier over a colonised people, nation etc. We can glean from the events of global history that these breaks are rarely clean or definite in duration. Many former colonies, including Ireland, are still ironing out the lasting consequences of colonial domination on the national mindset, positive and negative. The power struggles at the core of colonialism impact "subordinate" identities at every possible level – politically, culturally, linguistically etc. As a result, Othering and later theoretical concepts like hyphenated identity came into being owing to the cataclysmic dominance of colonisers over indigenous cultures. In the aftermath of colonialism fixed notions of nation and identity became destabilised and were restructured, but rarely without violent upheaval and political tumult. However, this instability and the subsequent restructuring of nationalistic ideologies forged the way for complex, alternative and multicultural voices to emerge from the cacophony of upheaval

in these reimagined newly sovereign nations. Lloyd therefore concludes that processes of decolonisation 'make way for the reconstitution of alternative narratives which emerge in the history of our present, with its multiple contemporaneous rhythms and intersections' (2001, p.17). But these new modes of self-actualisation do not appear overnight. Many former colonies still grapple with complex feelings of contempt (or admiration) for their former oppressors whilst struggling to self-define in ways that can encompass all its citizens. Ashcroft says that new post-colonial identities are specifically imagined in relation to how we are, 'positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past' (2001, p.4). Hong Kong, for example, which was handed over by the British in 1997, continues to witness huge civil unrest regarding Chinese rule since the last months of 2019, a direct backlash by the Westernised former colony against the advances of Communist-led Chinese rule.

Post-colonialism is a long-established part of the discourse around Irish national identity, but how does this phenomenon pertain to the Irish-Jewish? The perpetual wanderers of literature such as Joyce's Leopold Bloom perhaps symbolise the distrust by local nationalist causes of Jewish communities who were considered to be in a permanent state of rediasporization (Boyarin 1992, p.3). Cheng suggests the influence of the nationalist movement on creation of the Bloom character in that, 'the issue of defining "Irishness" was a central one in Joyce's time, witnessing attempts by a nationalist movement to forge a national identity' (2000. p.240). The nationalist projects of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries traded on a central ideology that Father and Mother nations were manifestations of divine and just prophecy (Gilman 2004, p.vi). The question for many at the forefront of nationalist projects then became one of whether Jews could be relied upon to display genuine loyalty to a patriotic cause when the issues of location, nationhood and belonging were often culturally immaterial to many in the diaspora? Bearing in mind the backdrop of the "Decade of Centenaries"[28] against which this research was conducted and the idea that the independence movement can be viewed as a pinnacle expression of realised Irishness, my interest lies in reflecting upon Jewish attitudes to cultural nationalism in this context. Is there evidence that this relatively new ethnic minority to Ireland, of less than 150 years residency, found themselves culturally subjugated in

[28] Commencing in 2012, The Decade of Centenaries is the official State programme of events commemorating the struggle for Irish independence. Special events in Dublin and nationwide have marked the centenary anniversaries of key historical events dating back to the period 1912 - 1922.

entirely different ways from the wider population? Or were Irish-Jews doubly subjugated on account of their hybrid cultural identities as (subordinated) Irish and (subordinated Other) Jewish? Deane suggest that the aftermath of colonialism has a lasting impact on representation suggesting that, 'inevitably, in a colonial or neo-colonial country like Ireland, the forms of '[o]therness' available are multiple and blatant, so much so that they rarely escape stereotyping' (S. Deane in Ní Éigeartaigh 2010, p.119).

Figure 5 (3.3): Antisemitic poster (Used with permission of The Kerryman Newspaper, 2020).

It is widely agreed upon that historically the Irish have experienced blatant subjugation and cultural mockery by the British Empire in everything from rule of law, to literary and satirical representation. Adopting a position that, 'from the post-colonial view of the subaltern, Jews are both the ultimate cosmopolitan migrants and collectively associated with exploitation (as a global plutocracy) of disadvantaged minority populations' (Sicher 2014, p.2), it is possible then to imagine that Irish Jewry may have encountered both external (imperialist) and internal (nationalist) subjugation due to their combined cultural identities, both of which traditionally faced particular prejudices. In crass terms, were Irish Jews perhaps considered the lowest of the low amongst colonial and imperial attitudes? Lentin puts forward the argument that once Irishness became a racialised phenomenon, the Irish obtained a kind of privilege whereby they, 'often benefited from their role within the British Empire yet remained clearly subordinate within the imperial chain' (2002a, p. 17). It seems possible that the Irish-Jewish did not fit the collective self-image of what constitutes Irishness, given repeated accounts of both blatant and insidious antisemitisms. Deane confirms this by saying, 'an idea of Ireland has to be fashioned,

discovered, recreated over and against that which threatens to disallow it' (S. Deane in Ní Éigeartaigh 2010, p.119). Just as in Sartre's France, Irish Jews were faced with the impossibility of assimilation into a population that religiously and constitutionally would forever deem them Other.

The experience of this kind of latent Othering - who is Irish and who is not - is expressed by Woman 3 in *Here Shall We Rest*, and indeed was recounted by most participants at some point during my fieldwork sessions. Woman 3 offers the example of an encounter with an Irish colleague lightly, but the story has weighty symbolism:

> ***I had a boss who once said to me, he only said one or two things, but they were very pointed, eh, he said to me "Why is it all your people go away?" This is a man who had six children. You know, "they get the best of Ireland and then they go away." And this was a man who, five of his kids at the time had gone through university and were living abroad!*** (Laughs)

McVeigh and Lentin refer to this kind of discrimination as 'the Other inside' (2002a, p.22) - the internal subjugation of Jewry within the hierarchy of Irish identity, which also includes a tradition of racism towards Blacks and the indigenous Travelling community. Irish Jews were to remain outside the emerging neo-colonialism of strict Catholicism at the forefront of the newly independent Free State, and later Republic (Lloyd 2001, p.16)[29]. Nationalist identity has until very recently been conflated exclusively with Catholic identity and so the specificity of Irish antisemitism in part due to long-held Catholic bias and the historical perception of Jews as cynically embedded in money matters. Until the Second Vatican Council in 1965, Catholicism placed the blame for the death of Jesus Christ firmly in the hands of the Jews (McVeigh and Lentin 2002 p.21), and the religious

[29] Philosophical argument around acts of territorial expansion by the contemporary Zionist movement in Israel thus constituting neo-colonialist oppression are now widely debated by contemporary revisionists like Slavoj Žižek and Ilan Pappé (Sicher 2014, p.5).

prejudice of this belief and its ramifications has been well documented in many other predominantly Catholic countries such as Poland. The narrow definitions of Irishness inscribed in the 1937 Constitution meant that our monoculture, the ultra-hegemonic Ireland, was expounded by Uachtarán Eamonn De Valera for decades as our unique selling point (Lentin 2002a, p.157). The Irelands of both pre and post-colonialism, embedded in either British subjugation or Catholic dogma, appear to have offered little space to further a more complex distillation of what the Irish experience could be. This tension between nation-self and the internal-Other is summarised by Jewish theorist Jonathan Boyarin who says;

> The tendencies to essentialize Self and Other, to buttress national collective identity with a fiction of majestic and pure origins […] these were all practiced since the early Modern period on various of Europe's Others.
>
> (1992, p.79)

The impact of post-colonial sensibilities on the Irish-Jewish community and of the associated processes of reconstruction remain something of a grey area because of the lack of mature critical historiographies of the community in contemporary Irish discourse (Wynn 2017, p.16). Any positioning of the Jewish community with regard to ideas of Irishness, implicit or reimagined, is inextricably linked to changing ideas of nationhood and who was to remain outside of that concept. Wynn confirms this stating that, 'the effort to carve a metaphorical Jewish "space" within the largely Catholic founding narrative of the Irish state reflects 'an unspoken communal policy of avoiding engagement in any critique of the Jewish experience in Ireland' (Ibid., p.22). Thus, scant fact and anecdote remain largely at the centre of enquiry into Jewish pre- and post-colonial attitudes here. For example, we do know that a Judeo-Irish Home Rule Association was founded in 1908, and that many Jews supported the Irish republican cause perhaps owing to traditionally more socialist leanings (mostly anecdotal, according to Wynn). As a result, a small number of Jews were prominent players in the struggle for national independence around this time (Ibid., p.8). However, even the most inclusive debates on what constituted Irish identity would usually only extend the definition to a subscription to Catholicism or Protestantism, up until the Good Friday Agreement of 1997 and the influx of asylum seekers from the late 1990s onwards. The smokescreen of unified national identities is further undermined by Finneran citing post-colonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha who argues that;

> Contrary to the definite certainty with which the origins of nations are often spoken of, particularly by historians in the modernist tradition, Bhabha suggests that 'the cultural temporality of the nation inscribes a much more transitional social reality'.
>
> (Finneran 2009, p.290)

This transnational social reality can perhaps best be observed in the emergence of hybrid identities occurring as a result of the diffraction of fixed definitions of identity, in the aftermath of colonial rule. However in the case of the Jewish community in Ireland who had settled well in advance of the declaration of the Republic, theirs is a wholly unique iteration of hybridity as Irish(-). The question then prevails; at what point did the community begin to describe themselves as Irish-Jewish? Many would argue that this question is irrelevant because definitions of identity are constantly in flux or are specific to the individual. Whilst I don't think it is necessarily helpful to try to pinpoint a moment when the community assimilated, or became "one of us", or indeed when they were granted integration by wider society, it is perhaps pertinent to consider the label of Irish-Jewish on the grounds of an awareness to how attitudes, ergo representations, appeared over time. At this complex juncture Ní Eartaigh suggests that;

> In spite of this postcolonial optimism about the opportunities for new, more liberating narratives of identity available to the intercultural being [however] defining oneself at the intersection of competing cultures is not always straightforward.
>
> (2010, p.116)

How did the Jewish community come to put the "Irish" first, and could the Irish (Catholic) ever accept them as anything other than Other?

3.4 Other identity crises

Externally imposed distancing of Jewish identity is not the only circumstance by which types of Othering can occur. A sort of internal distancing (different from the notion of self-Othering) evolved in parallel with the emergence of Zionism in the late 1800's as the ultimate goal of the creation of a permanent Jewish state began to take hold as a real possibility for the first time, backed by widespread support from a mounting political ideology. The realisation of the Jewish State is often acknowledged as a contributing

factor in the reconfiguration of contemporary Jewish identity from that of the exiled diaspora, to people of a specially designated homeland. Following the proclamation of the State of Israel in 1948, newly settled European and Russian Jews were actively encouraged to abandon the provincial Yiddish in favour of Hebrew, the language of the new 'manifest destiny' state of Israel (Baumgarten, cited in Lehmann 1998, p.78). A quandary emerged as the Ashkenazi (Eastern European), Sephardim (Spaniards), Mizrahim (Middle Eastern and North African), Palestinians (Christian, Muslim, Bedouin etc.) and others were awkwardly welded together in the forging of a new collective identity for the people. 'Israel, consequently, was based on a complete overhauling of the ethnic identities of the population over whom it was to have jurisdiction' (Massad 1996, p.54). For some, this literal geographical repositioning of cultural and religious Jewishness resulted in an affirmative, unifying sense of self, and feelings of belonging to a much-anticipated homeland. In contrast however, for many other Jews the accomplishment of Zionist ideals stirred feelings of Otherness and disassociation from their heritage. Lehman suggests that for some (American Jews, for example) this new Jewish-Israeli identity added to the fragmentation of an existing 'rift between Israeli and Diasporic understandings of Jewishness' (1998, p.78). Massad further corroborates this position by asserting that the burgeoning Israeli state, post British withdrawal in 1948, was keen to adopt and adapt European gentile culture which became 'alien to Diasporic Jews' (Massad 1996, p.53). This inner struggle between nation and homeland is, I believe, best reinforced by philosopher Emmanuel Levinas who writes;

> The creation of the State of Israel revealed to Jews themselves, to the great surprise of some of them, the depth of their enrootedness in Western countries […] And yet assimilation failed. It failed because it did not put an end to the anguish felt by the Jewish soul.
>
> (1997, p.255)

A nomadic patchwork of experience often accompanies Jewish identity, as described in literature and academia alike. The scattering of its peoples to the edges of the globe over generations who, along the journey, absorbed local identities and in many cases blended them with their own or transformed them into something entirely new. A lineage of dispersal histories smattered with the fragments of generational trauma, as well as the influence of vivid artistic, theological and intellectual languages has resulted in the evolution of a culture of acute adaptability. This bricolage-like blending of identities

informs much of the Jewish experience which, according to Jones, makes it full of rich ambivalence and therefore ideally suited to the purposes of ethnographic and intercultural storytelling (2002, p.14).

In the field interview conducted with Woman 1 (Sept 2016), we discussed the idea of a unifying national identity and how, in particular the Irish experience of nationhood can foster a hugely positive sense of commonality. As the Irish are familiar with meeting fellow countrymen and women abroad, finding out where the other is from and whom you both might know in common; of the immediate sense of solidarity and togetherness that follows this reciprocal interrogation, the clannish in-joking at the chance the encounter in a foreign land can be immensely gratifying. Perhaps these are inherited survival techniques? The immediate measure-taking of the stranger by the stranger to assess who is ally and who is foe? Perhaps it is a shared pride in our national identity, or an innate curiosity for the stranger? But for Woman 1 this was not an experience she could relate to as a Jewish-Israeli, where the ambiguity and interpretation of that identity can be so diverse that little commonality exists between peoples in some cases:

> ***Notes from Field Diary: 25-09-16***
>
> **So much background noise during this interview – JCBs, drilling, and a carillon of bells. Weird polyphony. Especially the building works…on a Sunday?! The chaos of Israel is here too it seems...Then, gesticulating emphatically, she says –**
>
> ***We are not the same at all. At all […] I don't assume that I would like every Israeli that I meet. Or that I would feel connected to them at all. At all.***

Conversely, during my field interview with Woman 3 (Nov 2017) she expressed both her sense of Irishness and her Jewishness as separate but immensely unifying attributes in both Jewish and non-Jewish circles. Though she was unable to definitively suggest what these shared attributes between both cultures might be, she instead alluded to a feeling that being both Irish and Jewish are special, parallel experiences:

Notes from Field Diary: 11-11-17

A cosy, open-plan 1980s kitchen. Frilly things, folk art. Cake – everywhere cake! Woman 3, a 60-something Irish Yidische Mamma type. Very polite and stylishly dressed; loving, caring. I ask what it means to be Irish-Jewish, as her partner is not Irish (and hardly Jewish anymore, by his own admission):

I think it's a terrific blessing to be an Irish-Jewish person. I mean I'm Irish first, my religion is Jewish but as I always say, I'm Irish-Jewish ....
Because...all over the world you meet Jewish people; all over the world you meet Irish people. And there is something – I could tell an Irish person without them opening their mouth, and I, like that (she snaps her fingers), I could tell a Jewish person without them opening their mouth...

The conflicts arising from self-definition and themes such as cultural inheritance versus religious tradition, Zionism versus the diaspora, Jewishness versus secularism are common leitmotifs of late 20th Century plays by Jewish playwrights. Both Pascal (2003) and Jays (2019) note a dilution of Jewish identity in literary arts amongst some English-Jewish playwrights such as Peter Brooke and Harold Pinter. Pascal quips that, 'the good Jew is a bleached Jew' (Jays 2019, para.7). However, Gilman argues that the 'attribution of difference' makes for fertile creative playing ground (1991, p.1). In that vein, playwrights such as Arnold Wesker, Bernard Kops and Julia Pascal made a point of departure from glossing over Jewishness by locating their work very specifically on a Jewish spectrum of identity. In something of a reckoning for the playwright and filmmaker Mike Leigh, his 2006 play *Two Thousand Years* tackles the question of Jewish identity head-on, though the writer had previously shied away from the topic in his work for stage and screen. Leigh later suggested that all his work is in fact Jewish given the unique tragi-comic perspective that the culture afforded him (Grant 2006, para.6). In the play leftist secular Jewish couple Rachel and Danny are confronted with their own inherited identity issues when their son Josh becomes increasingly interested in the faith, eventually even taking on the clothing and prayer customs of a religious Jew. During a

pointed debate on the subject, Josh's sister Tammy touches on the difficulty of articulating the vagaries of what it means, or feels like, to be Jewish;

> Josh: Okay, Tammy, what does it mean to you to be Jewish?
> Tammy: Me?
> Josh: Yes, you.
> Tammy: Well, being Jewish is just part of who I am.
> Josh: What's that supposed to mean?
> Tammy: Well, like my little toe… or my middle finger. It's not the whole of me – I feel Jewish, and I don't feel Jewish. And I've got no idea what it's like not to be Jewish.
>
> (Leigh 2006, Act1 Sc.8)

Tammy, it seems, feels neither Jewish, nor non-Jewish and therefore presumably neither within the identity, nor totally without it. This snatch of dialogue echoes both articulations encountered in my fieldwork that I describe above – that there is very little to unify people who share versions of this identity (Woman 1), or that everything unites those of Jewish heritage (Woman 3) where feelings replace specific qualities. These kinds of inner conflicts regarding Jewish identity have been expressed repeatedly by playwrights and artists. There are many other examples of the dichotomy between the perceived strengths and ambiguities of Jewish identity, or the imposing of a sense of Jewishness. These concerns were expressed in art and academia by the self-Othering movement of the Jewish Beat scene which coincided with the Civil Rights movement in 1950s and '60s America. The anti-establishment, anti-essentialist pushback by these creatives and thinkers against the fixed identities defined by a predominantly conservative society was spearheaded by poet Allen Ginsberg 'to create a sense of poetic freedom at the margins' of identity (Svonkin 2010, p.167). The kind of self-Othering proposed by Ginsberg was an attempt to kill off his white, male, American self and instead adopt a subaltern, marginalised and newly hybridised identity on the fringes of society (Ibid). Though Ginsberg's activities as an artist, activist, and spiritual thinker were based very much outside of the influence of religious Judaism, Ginsberg was inadvertently responsible for a new way of engaging with the faith for many American Jews. He suggested Jews interrogate the accepted traditionalisms of their identity at a more critical level, and acknowledge 'their right to choose and create their own social, cultural, and spiritual territories, where Judaism is one element in a larger amalgam' (Ariel 2019, p.2). Ginsberg

encountered much criticism for his interpretation of what Jewishness means, one critic accusing him of,

> […] a Jewishness which has undergone violence, cruelty, madness and has been twisted by experience. It is quite frankly a neurotic Jewishness. If a phrase is wanted, Ginsberg represents the mid-Twentieth Century existential Jew.
>
> (Gartenberg in Cantor 1976, p.10)

Ginsberg's was a very Jewish approach to re-examining concepts of identity where the rigorous interrogation of God's word and subsequent interpretations by generations of rabbis is a core characteristic of the study of sacred Jewish texts. Through his rejection of prescribed identity, Ginsberg attempted to abandon a position of privilege as a white, heteronormative male within his writing, in favour of a freedom of identity at the margins. Ginsberg's self-Othering as a homosexual poet of distant and complex American and Jewish heritages was a quest for psychological, political, spiritual, or aesthetic sense of freedom from a binary, culturally rigid, (literally) black and white post-war society (Svonkin 2010, p.167).

3.5 The Box Marked "Other"

In defining who is Other in the context of this research project, I should mention my own occasional feelings of a kind of outsiderness to the various iterations of culture expressed. That is to say, how Judaism or a Jewish heritage can inform daily life, outlook etc. in ways that are different to my own non-Jewish experience. Michelle Fine asserts that these kinds of oscillating feelings, of being both inside and outside this work, though sometimes uncomfortable are a useful and important part of the process.

> [A]s researchers, we need to position ourselves as classed, gendered, raced, and sexual subjects who construct our own locations, narrate those locations, and negotiate our stances with relations of domination.
>
> (Fine 1994, p.76)[30]

[30] It is perhaps useful here to address my decision to refer to participants in the play text itself as "Gender/Number"(e.g. "Man 1"). This deliberate decision is in-keeping with many examples from the verbatim theatre canon, and is intended as something of an act of deconstruction of fixed identities and preconceptions. It is also intended as the direct prioritisation of the participant's lived experiences of being

It became necessary that I find ways to incorporate these feelings both creatively and bodily during the practice process; for example the figure of the Dybbuk in *HSWR* became an embodiment of certain discomforts and uncertainties I encountered during the research and making processes primarily connected to the feeling that being non-Jewish, I myself might be Other to this subject matter? (See Chapter 6 for more on Dybbuk folklore). In an effort to respond to the pushback I received regarding my relationship to the work (discussed in Chapter 5.4: Blindspot), and in order to locate the awkward and changing nature of my role within it, I have come to understand – use – and respond to questions of self and Other thus. Broadening Brons' dual modes of Othering (2015, p.72) with regard to the problematics of my positionality within the work, some basic intersections across the research become visible:

Two modes of othering: HSWR Practice Research

Mode 1 (potentially negative):	Mode 2 (intentionally positive):
self: Researcher/Maker/Performer *other*: Jewish community in Ireland; those with strong affiliations to the Jewish community in Ireland. Other minority groups.	*self*: Interviewees from fieldwork (Jewish in Ireland) *other*: Researcher/Maker/Performer (i.e. Me)

Figure 6 (3.5): Two modes of othering (Wylde after Brons)

Jewish in Ireland over other potentially prejudicial factors such as socio-economic background or citizenship which might be signalled through further characterisation or fictionalisation. In this instance I was not intending to dominate the participant's truth by not giving them a name. Rather I favoured their unfiltered words over any other detail which might dilute these words for an audience. The dybbuk figure is a direct attempt to do the same regarding my own biased and multi-layered positionality, as Fine outlines it. The dybbuk acknowledges its biases firstly as resulting in an overall lack of knowledge on the subject. In arriving to a liminal space (a literal blank canvas) of no fixed identity, the dybbuk becomes free to explore and reinterpret its own identity (mine), the participant's identities, and later the concept of Irish identity as a whole.

I see Mode 1 as follows: where *self* is me, interrogating and responding as non-Jewish-Irish and Researcher / Maker / Performer, and *other* refers to those who have grown up in the Jewish faith and traditions (either Irish citizens or long-time residents of Ireland). In Mode 2, '*self*' refers to the cross-section of people interviewed and performed in this practice research as a whole and who identify as members of the Jewish community in Ireland. In Mode 2, the '*other*' is me. This me is the non-Jewish Irish researcher/maker, and where the presence of this outsider identity has been beneficial or disruptive to the work acting as mediator between the audience and the subject. These modes entangled at various times throughout both practice and thesis in reaction to the particular moment of the writing or the focus of the embodied practice. By undertaking the making of a play about a minority group of people with a strong cultural identity outside of my (the maker's) own lived experience, I continue to be passionately committed to the creative exploration of cultural differences so as to emphasise shared cultural intersections amongst minority and majority populations in what Lehmann describes as the mapping of 'history, personal micro-histories and public macro-histories' (2006, p.9).

The title of this last section refers to an article in the Irish Independent from 2019 entitled, *The Jews in Ireland: Why tech giants are adding strength to a once shrinking community*. The article has a positive slant – it suggests that mutual interests of booming tech start-up culture in Israel and the well-established multinational tech sector in Ireland (Google, Facebook, Dropbox, etc.) account for a 29% overall increase in the number of Jews in Ireland in recent times. The article qualifies that this number has been calculated from the most recent census figures available at that time stating:

> Though there is no 'Jewish' tick-box option on the census form (a major bone of contention for the Jewish community), a total of 2,557 ticked the 'other' box in the 'religion' column and manually inserted the word 'Jewish'.
>
> (Clifford 2017, para.5)

A seemingly benign administrative omission, the lack of opportunity for self-declaration of faiths other than broadly noted Christian, Islamic and Hindu denominations is perhaps reminiscent of religious demographics past. No wonder then this is contentious for some members of the Jewish community in Ireland – the box that applies to them is literally denoted as "Other", and it is difficult to deny the semiotics at play. It is perhaps like saying, "You are here, grant you, but you are something apart. Something…else."

Without doubt similar contentions arise for other minority faith and cultural groups in Ireland. Meredith suggests that the more critical perspective of bicultural politics might be more conducive to rethinking 'our assumptions about culture and identity from an 'us-them' dualism to a mutual sense of 'both/and', thus allowing for difference but encouraging affinity' (1998, p.1). Conversations about multi, inter, and transculturalisms are still relatively new in Ireland, so where then might we look to for positive examples of how integrated, intersecting and equally acknowledged cultural experiences can come together to understand each other's difference and sameness in new ways? According to Wilshire, 'involvement and identification are the essence of theatre' occurring at 'the intersection of "world" and world' (1982, p.44). Perhaps the example we seek is not, after all, to be found elsewhere. Perhaps in Ireland we have the opportunity to become for ourselves an example of the possibilities of new intersecting cultural worlds by doing what we do best - telling each other's stories.

Reflections from a Fever Dream I: Mis-Appropriation

11:36pm

Drifting further into the black, I find myself in a restaurant.

It's not busy; speckled amongst the pools of mood lighting are the vague shapes of other customers. A heavy lace tablecloth on the table has a pattern of vines that are...moving as if growing? Sitting on top of the table is a pin, glitter-encrusted menorah with coloured candles that flame, then extinguish, then relight. All the chairs in the restaurant are covered in tinfoil…A menu for Orthodox Chews drops in my lap. The specials include Milkman Tevye's 'Rich' cheese platter; Yentyl casserole; Shikse kebab...

A woman with a Friday night head covering is ordering whilst a fancy couple in vintage suits and furs laugh hysterically… All their faces are perfect. Fixed expressions, and so shiny...Are they…wax? Waxwork Jews?! In the corner on various rungs of a leaning ladder, men in a kippahs are singing and percussing – the house band, Oy Division. Suddenly a waiter appears in full Hasidic garb, complete with silk slippers. Maybe it's the dingy lighting but he reminds me of someone...

"Shalom. I'm Daniel Day Lewis. I'll be your authentic Jewish waiter this evening."

I snort. "Daniel Day Lewis isn't Jewish."

"Pardon me madam. I think I would know because, you see, I am Academy Award-winning actor, Daniel Day Lewis."

Placing the menu on the table I say, "Well actually I think I would know because, you see, I happen to be something of an expert and

well, Daniel Day Lewis isn't Jewish. That's ridiculous. He's Irish! Like me."

"Mazel Tov, madam. I'd be delighted to take your order." (He doesn't mean it...he's definitely a good actor...)

"Well, Daniel, to start I'll have the Goose, with the Sammy Davis Jous noir on the side..."

The restaurant, the waxworks, everything gets sucked into the black of the waiter's jacket…

Digesting Demons

On the theme of cultural appropriation, I wish to discuss some related questions that have arisen during this research. Does Jewish culture get appropriated, here or elsewhere, and how? Am I guilty of cultural appropriation, even in its loosest sense, simply on account of the key coordinates of my own cultural location as non-Jewish outsider (Phelan 2017, p.1)? Like the pseudo-Jewish restaurant described in my fever dream, this section addresses some of the questions that kept me awake at night and stuck in my ethical craw at times when reflecting on this body of work.

Ziff and V. Rao outline a broad definition of cultural appropriation as the multidimensional phenomenon of the borrowing of artistic and traditional expressions of art, ways of knowledge, and history from a marginalised group for use or commodification by a dominant privileged group (1997, p.1). Pavis refers to this as a process whereby the adaptors and receptors of a source culture take possession according to their own perspectives and interests (1992, p.16). These same marginalised groups, these source cultures, have most likely faced social stigma at some point in history for the same cultural practices and traditions subsequently taken on by the dominant group. Familiar examples include the Vaudevillian tradition of blackface minstrelsy which perpetuated comedic and derogatory stereotypes of African-Americans. The use of First Nations imagery to sell everything from butter, to designer clothing, to football teams; the adoption into popular culture of Maori tribal tattoos traditionally imbued with deep meaning and significance beyond the purely decorative; the appropriation of traditionally Afro hairstyles as a sub trend of the rap music scene by non-black artists and fans.[31] These are just some of the destructive visual examples that come readily to the mind's eye and ear. An entire lexicon of negative inference also accompanies the commodification of culture for (usually) white consumption – mainstream versus Other; chic versus tribal; modern versus traditional. And alongside these examples is a culture of appropriation through wellbeing. In certain circumstances rituals, stories, and practices can go beyond the immediate demands made by technology and consumerism can assist our natural human desire for a deepening of authentic meaning. The emergence of yoga, for example, as a mainstream form of exercise is arguably a kind of benign positive cultural contortion

[31] In the wake of the George Floyd murder and Black Lives Matter protests of June 2020, much of this misappropriated imagery is being removed or re-evaluated.

(though some argue that without the dogma, modern yoga perpetuates the invisible oppression continually endured by Indians in the West). It seems less like that an Amazonian *ayahuasca* ceremony replicated in the wilds of West Cork and sold online as a destination retreat could live up to the authenticity of experience it declaims. The path to enlightenment begins, it seems, in Ballydehob. And in Hollywood, a brief flirtation with "Kabbalah Chic" in the early noughties shone a ray of light onto one of the more mysterious and ancient corners of Judaism. Altglas notes a celebrity trend around this time reported in tabloids and women's magazines (fronted most famously by pop icon Madonna) which adopted certain tropes of Kabbalistic mysticism, such as the recognisable red string wristband, and appropriated its symbolism as new-age self-help fads from the traditional Jewish text and intention (2011, p.30).

Young suggests that cultural appropriation in the arts can be denoted in three ways – subject, content and object appropriation[32]. He suggests that:

> Subject appropriation occurs when an outsider represents members or aspects of another culture. This sort of appropriation would occur when an outsider makes the culture or lives of insiders the subject of a painting, story, film, or other work of art.
>
> (2005, p.136)

It is this definition (and in a lesser way, his idea of content appropriation), that pertains most to the making and performance of *Here Shall We Rest*. It is possible to draw a direct line from this definition of subject appropriation back to Conquergood's theory of true dialogical process, and the kinds of conditions that prevent genuine communication or correspondence from occurring (See also Ingold 2018, in *Reflections from a Fever Dream: III*). Conquergood claims that authentic dialogical exchanges are prevented by a number of conditions which he has characterised as 'The Enthusiast's Infatuation' or 'The Curators Exhibitionism' (1985, p.5). It was this kind of naive or careless research and making that I was most concerned with being guilty of. Maybe this was because of my personal connection to some of the participants, however there is foundation in the argument that not all acts of cultural translation are intended as violent acts of

[32] For the purposes of broadening the discourse around the arts, I include terms like multiculturalism, interculturalism, transculturalism, ethnography and ethnodrama, which are all concerned with similar ends – that is the study and/or performance of culture, and the staging of data relating to the experience of culture and its interactions.

appropriation, or reckless recolonisation. Some more recent opinion argues that the term appropriation incites a kind of knee-jerk reaction to all work made by cultural outsiders, without taking into account deeper nuances at play. Sakar, for example, argues convincingly that '[t]he appropriation debate peddles a comforting lie that there's such a thing as a stable and authentic connection to culture that can remain intact after the seismic interruptions of colonialism and migration' (2019, para.12). Tempering the controversy of appropriation, Ziff and V. Rao are quick to assert that the boundaries of culture themselves are often ambiguous and rarely fixed particularly in post-colonial, postmodern societies. The enigmatic nature of culture, the idea that culture is a fluid and rarely static thing that adapts and evolves in relation to location and circumstance, makes it equally difficult therefore to define the ways in which it can be appropriated, transmutated or simply borrowed (1997, p.2). Most events of popular culture have far-reaching roots back to at least one other source of cultural inspiration. Even the process and outcomes of appropriation are arguably a contradiction in terms – the implied quest for cultural diversity can often lead to the narrowing of definitions through the perpetuation of assumption, or lumping all subtlety into one commodified, over-simplified category. The erasure of difference often leads to a loss of all nuance, and the idea that similar cultures are simply interchangeable.

Tangible examples of how cultural appropriation manifests in relation to Jewish culture can be found in the work of American researcher and journalist Ruth Ellen Gruber, who has made the adoption, or translation, of Jewish identity the focus of her enquiries. Gruber coined the term 'virtually Jewish' in her travel writing to account for the vacant Jewish spaces in Europe where Jewish culture once authentically resided but has since been replaced by reimagined versions of Jewishness (2009, p.488). Her research focus looks at the ways in which non-Jews transform elements of Jewish culture in order to locate their own contemporary identities (Ibid.). In many parts of Europe, Jewish culture – its study, revival and reinterpretation – has become mainstream, particularly since the fall of Communism and the surge in a preservation of Holocaust testimony before the last generation of living survivors passes on. Gruber suggests that this phenomenon has been particularly successful in locations where Jewish life was most brutally attacked in the past. Berlin, for example, is now widely considered the locus of expertise in *klezmer* music outside of Israel, whilst its Jewish heritage sites – like the *Neue Synagogue,* an uber-stylish Jewish Museum – attract tens of thousands of tourists every year. Every major European city, including Dublin, has an acknowledged Jewish Quarter of some sort

where, at the very least, interested visitors can participate in a guided walking tour of former Jewish sites of interest for insight into what life *was* like. And in Poland, the epicentre of Jewish extermination during World War II, dark tourism (also referred to as Holocaust tourism) has, according to Blankenship, 'largely replaced Jewish memorial pilgrimage in Europe' (2018, p.3). The Kazimierz district of Kraków, one of the most important geographical sites of pre-war Jewish life, is now the location of one of the largest annual international festivals of Jewish culture, a mere half hour's journey away from the infamous Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. The founders of the Jewish Culture Festival and majority of the attendees are not Jewish; neither could most of the themed restaurants, bookshops and cultural centres that occupy the area lay claim to the title "authentically Jewish".

Figure 7 (Reflection 1): Jewish restaurant Kazimierz, Kraków. (Photo: Wylde, 2015)

But, argues Gruber, "[t]he Jewish Krakow scene in itself is real, an authentic, living phenomenon, even though it may not be ''authentically Jewish'' according to traditional definitions of ''Jews,'' ''Jewish,'' or ''Judaism"' (2009, p.492). For Gruber, this world symbolises a kind of new Jewish authenticity – not one of appropriation or imitation, rather a place that is "real" to itself and to its own reality. Perhaps places like Kazimierz have had to reinvent these new authenticities for themselves, not to expunge the events of history but to salvage something, anything, positive from its embers. The trend appears to be that the lesser the Jewish population in a given European city or district, the greater the "Jewish space" that emerges within these ghost zones (Pinto 1996, p.7). Or perhaps these are actually highly insensitive commercial acts of cultural appropriation, which

cause the same kind of 'profound offense' represented for many by Shakespeare's Shylock (Young 2005, p.139).

Jewish and Irish traditional cultures intersect and overlap in many ways – shared histories or religious persecution and emigration, the veneration of the family unit, and the merits of education and scholarly pursuits. Whilst I freely admit to certain shared cultural sensibilities like the centrality of family, of food, and of heritage, I do not desire to *become* Jewish, much in the same way I do not desire to become, for example, Dutch. Instead I want to highlight that the arts in Ireland has excluded many voices and that we can no longer lean on the crutch of our own history of political and cultural upheaval as an excuse for these omissions. Similarly, I have no wish to imitate aspects of Irish-Jewish culture, so that through some prowess of performance I might somehow be taken for being from the community – that I convincingly portrayed the perception of Jewishness. Performance artist and language researcher Hetain Patel, argues that the mimicry of someone or something else is always an attempt to reveal more about yourself (2013, 00:07:58). Though my intention was to understand things about my own culture, I would argue that I was very distinctly not appropriating Jewish culture because I was not participating in the mimicry of it. The appropriation of the Jewish experience in Ireland does not seem to have occurred because of a mainstream popularisation of Jewish customs, or the mimicry of traditions. It has occurred through the perpetuation of racist or two-dimensional stereotypes in our artistic representations. Crucially, by employing the metaphor of something living *through* me (which sounds irritatingly worthy), and by using testimony, and sourced Jewish texts etc., I asked the question, "who are we?" (inclusive of our differences) as a direct rebuttal to the exoticisation posed by questions like "who are they?". Here again I turn to Conquergood who calls for new modes of performance that resist settling on conclusions but are instead intensely committed to the open-ended and continuing dialogical exchange (1985, p.409).

McIvor and Spangler suggest that terms like multi/interculturalism have been used in broad stroke terms to frame discussions around 'Western appropriations of non-Western narratives and performance practices' (2014, p.xviv). With specific reference to theatre practitioners who spearheaded multiculturalism such as Peter Brook, Richard Schechner, Jerzy Grotowski and Robert LePage, Knowles concurs that modernist and postmodernist approaches to transcultural art and communication are often guilty of Othering through strategies of 'assimilation, understanding and inclusion' rather than through authentic and

equitable intercultural exchange (1998, p.190). He describes these one-sided exchanges as:

> […] my west includes your east; my masculine includes your feminine; my high culture your mass culture; my psychological and individualist your social; my capital your labour; my civilization your primitivism; my imperial centre your colonial margin [...] Ultimately, my formalist, inscrutiable, unchanging work of art includes – *comprehends* - your messy, fluid, corporal, feminized [sic], social, and otherwise threatening life: my shaping understanding kills you into art.
>
> (Ibid.)

Perhaps the 2018 controversy surrounding not one but two productions by the giant of Canadian contemporary theatre Robert Lepage, best exemplifies the kind of distortion of power dynamics that Knowles refers to. Lepage's *avant garde* approach to theatre-making in the 80s and 90s with his internationally renowned company *Ex* Machina meant that for more than forty years he had been a guiding light in the representation of contemporary Canadian stories. These stories drew from an array of cultural influences, new technologies and multidisciplinary methodologies. Lepage is often credited as having reinvented storytelling in ways that are uniquely and self-referentially Canadian, but also universal. However, in July of 2018 his new show *SLAV* was cancelled after only 2 performances despite some 8,000 tickets in advance sales. The play, which tells the story of a young woman's journey into her Haitian heritage, faced huge objection to the fact that the cast, who were predominantly white, were dressed as cotton pickers singing African American slave songs. Lepage and Betti Bonifassi, the show's co-creators (both white), were accused of blatant insensitivity and cultural appropriation in perpetuating the marginalization of black communities in Quebec and all over the world. Lepage responded vehemently to the criticism, which he referred to as detrimental to artistic freedoms, and a negative consequence of an overly politically correct society. He defended his decision-making by suggesting that all art is, by its very nature, an act of cultural appropriation:

> Since the dawn of time, theatre has been based on a very simple principle, that of playing someone else [...] But when we are no longer allowed to step into someone else's shoes, when it is forbidden to identify with someone else, theatre is denied its very nature, it is prevented from performing its primary function and is thus rendered meaningless.
>
> (Kassam 2018, para.8)

The production returned that winter, recast with an increased number of black performers, but unable to fully shake the mantle of insensitivity that it had earned. As if this drama had not been derisory enough, that same July work on Lepage's directorial collaboration with the French multiculturalist company Théâtre du Soleil came to an abrupt halt. This play, *Katana – Episode I – The Controversy*, was billed as an examination of the relationship between the indigenous people of Canada and their various colonisers. However, in an open letter to Lepage and the show's backers, a number of indigenous artists and activists criticised the lack of participation or casting of indigenous consultants and performers. The accusation was that these omissions were not only offensive but compounded the lack of visibility and opportunity for artists from these communities. Though the play lost its North American backing, it was later staged in Paris in something of a riposte against the purported censorship experienced in Canada. A New York Times review said of the production:

> *Kanata* was supposed to delve into the troubled relationship between Canada's Indigenous people and their colonizers [sic]. The final product does explore the plight of the country's First Nations, but it does so through the defensive gaze of a white artist who can't resist telling us that he, too, has been victimized [sic].
>
> (Capelle 2018, para.2)

There is a kind of privileged insensitivity on display in the realisation of these two productions that is troubling. Lepage puts forward the argument that in his laboratory-style approach to theatre, where most of the production remains unplanned before rehearsals, the artist must be allowed the possibility of getting something wrong on the way to getting it right. However, it is my belief that the artist should at least try to get it right (that "right" being from the Other's perspective) from the outset of creation, and that good intention is no longer an adequate defence. *SLAV* was cited as the celebration of the music of a diabolical era in tribute to the slave communities who created these early slave songs and spirituals. But white actors singing slave songs in a supposed act of

unification through music, whilst costumed as slaves, resulted in a contemporary act of blackface, *sans* greasepaint, in the opinions of many in the audience.

What makes this debate relevant to Jewish identity is that arguably Jewish culture has thrived as a result of cultural appropriation. At one point in the play *Katana* a character laments the prevalence of political correctness over a humanistic outlook saying, ‘Nowadays, to understand a black person, you have to be black! To understand a Jewish person, you have to be Jewish!’ (Capelle 2018, para.10) (perhaps meant as a veiled reference to Lepage’s own treatment at the hands of the vast public outcry in 2018). Jews in the diaspora throughout history recognised that to gain any social acceptance they needed to appropriate the receiving culture quickly and convincingly. German Jews were amongst the last to be deported to the concentration camps, so deep was their assimilation into German society, because the Nazis were divided by the idea of exterminating “their own” people. It is more pertinent to this research, however, to return to the question of whether *HSWR* appropriates Jewish culture in Ireland. Or whether, by inserting myself into the narrative, I have in some way deprived members of the community from presenting their own narratives as they wish. On both these issues, I am somewhat torn. Whilst I dread slipping into uninformed blind spots of sensitivity, I do believe in the power of performative storytelling to bridge gaps in imaginative empathy. That I could represent the story of a black slave in the cotton fields of the Deep South seems a deeply insensitive leap; that I might meet the experience of Other Irish, if only halfway, seems empathetically imaginable.

Chapter 4: Becoming Other

> As journalists, we love difference, we love to fetishize difference. But increasingly in this confusing world, we need to be the bridge between those differences. But how do you do that? I think for me now, the answer is simple: you interrogate those differences, you hold them for as long as you can [...] The story cannot end in difference. It's got to end in revelation...
>
> (WNYC Studios 2020, 00:12:35)

As this thesis moves towards an evaluation of the play *Here Shall We Rest*, I wish to call upon some final theoretical totems adhered to during the creation of a piece of entangled practice. In Chapter 1, I looked at the ways in which a Jewish presence in Ireland has often been taken as something of an oddity or exoticism, and how this history and societal assumption might have influenced the representation of Jewish characters in Irish stories. Chapter 2 provides examples from Irish theatre and literature of previous representations of Jews and their place in Ireland, as frequently drawn by non-Jewish writers. Chapter 3 looked at theoretical Othering and how social biases associated with post-colonialism and postmodernism may have embedded themselves in Jewish identity in different ways. In this chapter I explore how to move through additional theory, towards its direct application or influence on practice and how living practices provoke theory (Freeman 2017, p.12). This chapter keeps closely in mind Scott Harvey's assertion that the purpose of art is to change how we relate to and see each other 'so that we may do things differently in the places where we live' (2016, p.35). But weaving a polyphony of voices and sources in the presentation of non-fictional Others is a process not without its tensions. These are examined through the lenses of two of Jacques Derrida's deconstructionist perspectives: *différance* and *hauntology*. I ask whether a poststructuralist outlook could coerce a deconstruction of the historical negative Other sometimes attached to Jewish identity. I reflect on the philosophical insights from Emmanuel Levinas to the same end, and how these have influenced the thinking behind this practice research. I ask whether a practical utility of any of these concepts is at all possible so that more fully realised representations of the Other might be achieved. Lastly, I propose an alternative space of creation and collaboration that multi-voiced theories,

perspectives and methods might occupy comfortably together. A Third Space which opened up organically to fit this research paradigm.

4.1 Words and Spectres

The notion of identity as the consistent, boundaried and essential nature of a person was repeatedly undermined by poststructuralist revisionists from the late 1970s onwards (Smith 2011, p.8). Derrida was an outspoken proponent of the revision of accepted structuralist ideas such as the shared conventions of culture (language, art and their associate hierarchical structures). He rejected them as wholly definable, positing instead the inherent failure and shortcomings of rigid systems of expression. Extending beyond cultural signposts, poststructuralism suggests that personal identity can never be a fixed thing, but instead is a product of fluid and changing circumstances like socio-cultural influence and ideological biases (religion, class and gender). It is arguably counter-instructive to try to attach definitions to Derridean theory, however it is perhaps for this very reason that Derrida nuzzles into the field of performance theory somewhat comfortably because he necessitates the uncertainties between fixed points and ideas, and the multitude of possible meanings contained within. Yet finding a point of entry into Derrida's writing for the purposes of practical application can be frustrating.

One possible way of connecting Derridean theory to this arts practice research is through the recognition of his own relationship, or not, to Judaism. Despite his confirmed atheism, Derrida's own Jewish identity is distinctly perceptible in what Schatz calls the 'diasporic, itinerant, self-questioning' approach he took to relaying his poststructuralist theories (Schatz cited in Brook 2006, p.10). Caputo asserts that much Derridean theory emanates from his 'broken alliance' with Judaism, which coequally removed him from and bound him to the faith (1997, p.xviii). He frequently returns to the idea that this broken alliance was, for Derrida, first enacted during the birth rite of circumcision (Ibid., p.284), which physically established "[t]he scission between his Judaism and his non-Judaism' (Ibid., p.283). When viewed through the lenses of both Jewish identity studies and performance theory then, as is the case here, Derridean philosophy becomes doubly germane. Deconstruction (somewhat informed by his inherited Judaism) openly invites vacant spaces between binary oppositions, between fixed identities and fluid, or lived, identities, and, in the case of this research, the subsequent interpretation of these non-experiences in

theatre art. Meaning becomes as much concerned with what is absent, as it is with that which is present – the 'Who am I? Who are you? What is coming?' (Ibid., p.xxii). Derrida describes these spaces as, '[t]he strange labour of conversion and adventure' (1978, p.11) where, amidst the murkiness of identity politics and the problematics of Othering, acts of deconstruction might actually assist the rebuilding of representation, playing with signifiers to locate new meaning – what Caputo refers to as Derrida's '[p]assion and [a] prayer for the impossible' (1997, p.xx).

One of these impossible spaces promotes the dismantling of the spoken and written word. Previously, Western thinkers had prioritised language as the locus of inherent truths and the articulation of a central origin of absoluteness. Derrida referred to this bias as *Logocentrism* and refused the totality of the legitimacy of speech and the written word over other forms of expression like art and music. As an alternative, he proposed the notion of *différence*. The spirit of the concept is that it should remain undefined, however it is possible to mark the corners of this idea to meet my wider research objectives. Derrida argues in favour of the neither / nor interaction between the words "differ" (to be different from) and "defer" (to put off until later). *Différance* is therefore a (non)concept with no truly fixed definition of itself. Instead it seeks to undermine the absolutism of binary opposites through the deconstruction of meaning in language by offering an alternative (differing) or refusing a definite meaning (deferral). In doing this a space emerges between fixed points where distinction (difference), and malleability of definition (deferral) co-exist, continuously morphing into new implications and relationships of meaning. Jamieson suggests that to date there has been a 'limited focus' on the relationship between ideas like *différence* and performance theory and attributes this to a reliance on secondary sources necessary for the penetration of Derridean theory. He claims that, '[t]he controversy surrounding deconstruction has served to promote[...] reductive slogans such as "all reading is misreading"' (2007, p.61). Admittedly, it would require a separate body of study to apply Derridean theory to performance practice in a way that goes beyond the essential, possibly reductive. However, an awareness of his theories might open the praxis up to more fully realised representations of in-between experiences and emerging identities. Harrop, for example, defends the inclusion of ideas like *différence* in performance theory, as it allows for uncertainties at the intersection of representation, presentation and meaning, thus undermining previously upheld stereotypes. This is perhaps a rudimentary understanding and application of the theory of *différence,* but even this maintains the possibility of liminal play at the site of

representation, presentation, and meaning through the destabilisation of absolutes such as "Irishness means.." or, "Jews are…". In the traditional sense of the word Other, Brah asks, '[h]ow does difference designate the 'other'? Who defines difference? What are their presumed norms from which a group is marked as being different?' (1996, p.115) Applying the playful nature of the concept of *différence* invites space between binary opposites perhaps achieving an alternative Other that renders previously negative connotations positive, or at least neutral.

By its very nature *HSWR* followed a poststructuralist turn in that the material gathered together refused to follow the form of the traditional narrative arc, sometimes expected by audiences in a theatre setting. The narrative instead sought to lead them on a journey of multiple meanings and possible outcomes by declaring uncertainty from the beginning, rather than asserting itself as a definitive snapshot of Jewish identity in Ireland – what Irish identity *is*. At the centre of this was the constant notion of Derrida's preference to play with signifiers – a non-Jewish actor performing deeply subjective testimonies on what it might be like to experience Ireland through a Jewish lens. Interestingly, Harrop claims that *différence* is 'particularly apposite in folklore where there has been an emphasis on matters of textual and performative diffusion and variation' (2013, p.4). Owing to its transient and changeable nature, its regional or generational specificity, folkloric tropes often exemplify the malleable form of an idea like *différence.* Folklore, despite being handed down for many generations, is rarely the same from one iteration to the next and always carries the traces of other past versions of itself. My dybbuk was a deconstructed entity, rebuilt through the pasts and presents of the interviewees, and my own past and present as a researcher and performer. Derrida calls this a process of writing what has already been read, saying what is already a response in order to bring about a new transparency of meaning (1978, p.11). It is because of the duality of the theatre space as the location of both deconstruction and "undeconstructability" (its pseudo-ritualistic nature) that allows it the flexibility for ideas like Derridean *différence*.

Similarly, Derrida's word-playful term *hauntology* allows for the possibility of alternative non-realities and the imprint of history to occupy the same space as the present. If, according to this theory, everything must exist in the context of what was, what is, and what might be, then the notion of hauntology serves practice research especially well. This is confirmed by Fitzpatrick and her intra-active arts research on genealogical and national identities where she says;

> [...] hauntology is described as a methodology of deconstruction that works to problematize dominant narratives of the present, although it is important to note that ghostliness and haunting can serve, as well as disrupt, dominant narratives and relations.
>
> (2016, p.10)

In the case of this research, the practice is in and of itself a hauntological act – a tacit, embodied experiment located between definite acts of documentation (the interviews and this thesis). Some interviewees present as thematically haunted by issues like the struggle between religion and spirituality – some politically so, others ideologically so. The overall work is haunted by the history of the Jewish community in Ireland, and the broader issues of deep-rooted antisemitism. Even I am haunted by the many voices that continue to inform this work – the inexplicable pull to cultural Judaism; other work I have created about Jewish identity; the ethics of representation. Each of these voices, customs and encounters are filed in the library of my process, informing both my thoughts as researcher and my body as performer collectively – the baggage of a bricoleur, embodied. Therefore, a hauntological approach to practice research serves the process two-fold. On one hand, it addresses the complex nature of cultural identities *haunted* in a literal sense by historicity, politics, tradition and persecution. On the other hand, the notion speaks to the intangible process of the performative act, where the spectral passes through the performer-as-medium to the audience. It is the hauntological possibility between what is present and what is absent, like the appearance and disappearance of people, places, identities and traditions. It is a depiction of a space between a past life of sorts and the death to it which in this case is navigated by the spectre of the dybbuk. Lichtenberger calls this experience a fainting. He says that, '(t)o die and be reborn in the memory of one's former existence is [...] to awaken with other organs which must first be re-educated' (Lichtenberger cited in Derrida 1978, p.232). This is the rite of passage which my dybbuk undertakes, eventually reborn to new knowledge alongside the audience.

4.2 Facial Recognition

The work of French-Lithuanian philosopher Emmanuel Levinas is of even more relevance to this practice research, given that most of his ideas were shaped by his deeply Jewish outlook. At the centre of Levinas's overlapping ontological, existential and

phenomenological concepts is an emphasis on concern for the other person, and the concept that, 'I am responsible for the other without waiting for reciprocity' (Levinas 1985, p. 89). This idea is reflected in the basic metaphysical exchange that occurs at the heart of live performance – during the meeting of audience and subject – where the concern for one by the other is key. Arguably this idea is of particular pertinence to work dealing with biographical material or indeed in the staging of culture by those ethnically removed from that experience. Levinas' philosophy grew out of his rejection of the concept of *theodicy*[33], in light of his violently altered world view as a Holocaust survivor. He proposed a move away from the modern cult of the ego by taking on the suffering of others through acts of empathy and compassion, so as to go beyond the reductivity of our own existence as the primary centre of meaning and social structure (Johnston 2017, p.37). Levinas referred to this most beautifully as 'the curvature of the intersubjective space' (1969, p.303); the Other and I are not the same, but in abandoning the ego I recognise the Other matters more than I because fundamentally, we are indeed the same. Levinas also called for the undoing of the exigence of the present (immediate gratification) above the lessons of the past or consequences for the future, as reinforced by current social and economic neo-liberalist systems of power. In other words, Levinas proposes an ethics of attuned cognisance rather than the distraction of immediate gratification presented by the here and now. Over-reaching responsibility towards the Other, in all their difference, should be our primary focus, according to Levinas. This conclusion was undoubtedly shaped by the moral abuses he experienced first-hand during the Nazi persecution of the Jews. He proposes a return to our bodies where we may encounter the Other face to face, so as to trump acts of egotism with altruism. It is only through this kind of direct meeting that false constructs like ethnicity, nationalism and culture fall away, replaced instead by our basic, unifying and shared human identities. In primordial encounters with the face of the Other such as these, we can but be confronted with our duty to them as one and the same, regardless of apparent categorisations of difference. In the same moment that we are presented with the face of the stranger we are also made aware of the presence of the Divine, embodied through the Other's very existence. By taking a Levanasian approach to theatre then, I become responsible for both

[33] Theodicy is the attempt to answer the question of why God (or the gods) permit the manifestation of evil in the world by also arguing the existence of God in the first instance. Levinas rejected this concept as a legitimate argument in explaining-away of the atrocities committed under National Socialist ideology during WWII.

my subject and my audience, without mutuality. This fittingly becomes a mantra for entangled practice such as mine.

Levinasian notions require the help of third-party interlocutors to interpret some of the denser, nay mystic aspects, of his writings. As with Derrida this may indeed result in simplified understandings of these philosophies, but there are some core tenants here that speak directly to the witnessing of the transactions that take place in the theatrical process. Centrally this interaction with another's experience reflects the ritualistic origins of performance, and by adopting a Levinasian approach I hoped to achieve something closer to 'a true sublation of the "Other" and "Own"' (Weber 1989, p.37). As postmodernist theatre makers pushed storytelling modes beyond individual personal experience, realms of real encounter with the stranger opened themselves up. Contemporary theatre made under the influence of these kinds of principles actively discourages audiences from viewing the theatrical encounter solely as an opportunity to look inward upon their own human nature and existence. 'Performance, in this view, invites the spectator to assume ethical responsibility for the fragile life of the Other" (Ridout 2009, p.8), contrary to their traditional placement as executioner of ethical judgement *upon* the Other (ibid., 2009 p.15). In this way, Levinasian theory helps theatre makers and critical thinkers to consider the processes of the theatrical exchange between unknown subject and unknown spectator within the contexts of ethics, representation and witnessing (Salverson 2008, p.246). This was very much one of the intentions behind *HSWR*, given the assumption that the majority of the audience would not be familiar with either the history or experience of Jewish Ireland. The purpose of the narrative that was co-created with the participants was not to highlight differences negatively, but to challenge them head-on and within a specifically Irish context. The methodology applied in ethnographic data collection leading to the creation of new stories of shared experience at the intersection of various identifications was absolutely a face-to-face encounter at all stages of the process, including the invitation of feedback on the script and performance. Anthropologist and Jewish theorist Jonathan Boyarin pushes back against the ideals of the face-to-face encounter, instead arguing that it has a been more necessary in recent times for Jews to mine their own history as outsiders, rather than to locate themselves in relation to the stranger, as Levinas would ask (1992, xiv). Boyarin is critical of the supposed awakening of postmodernist narratives and tropes to highlighting the plight of the Other, referring to them as often congratulatory hubristic acts of accomplishment. He argues;

> [...] *finally* we have realised we are what we write, *finally* we have realised that the observer cannot be separated from the observed, *finally* we know that the monstrous Other is the monster in our minds…
>
> (1992, p.90)

I have experienced a Levinasian face-to-face encounter and can only describe it as a deeply spiritual moment which altered my world view entirely. Prior to my meeting Man 2 for the first time, now almost 15 years ago, I had read his Holocaust survivor testimony in depth. At the time I was devising a theatre outreach workshop for teenagers on the theme of the Holocaust, which coincided with a touring production of Juan Mayorga's play *Way To Heaven*. Like a good researcher, I read and reread his testimony in all its grim reality, knowing that he had only very recently come to terms with his past and had begun to speak about his experiences in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp as a 9 year-old boy. I thought myself journalistic enough to have prepared an extensive list of questions for him, even anticipating some of his responses on the basis of documentaries I had studied. What I had not, could not, prepare for was the actuality of our face-to-face meeting. I had never even seen a photograph of Man 2, so when we met for the first time in the restaurant of a local hotel his kind youthfulness, despite his years, was deeply disarming. Indeed, his positive demeanour was so reminiscent of some of the beloved older people in my own life that my first reaction was to burst into tears. Fast, burning, ugly sobs which took us both off-guard. How could a face as gentle and unmarked as his have witnessed such utter destruction and remain so unscathed? So open to me, the stranger. After a moment he reached for my hand as if to say, "I know". The extraordinary side-swiping power of this gesture has never left me. I think this is what Levinas is talking about; this is the kind of spiritually upending power that theatre has. The exchange between actor and spectator should be achieved not through mimicry or imitation, but through meeting. Ironically, Levinas was highly suspicious of art and artifice, contesting that it was "never tragic enough" (Salverson 2008, p. 245 and Ridout 2009, p.55). Jeffers argues that, with regard to a Levinasian dramaturgy, 'the face to face meeting might be better configured as being with or alongside the Other' without resorting to moral maxims or reductive notions of community (2012, p.159). Acting as a medium between audience and spectator as I did in *HSWR* was a way of including parties perhaps not in a pure face-to-face encounter, but to as close to that as I could replicate under the conditions of the performance and practice research. Both Ridout (2009, p.54) and Lehmann (cited in

Jeffers 2012, p.157) note the paradoxically uncertain nature of theatre (wherein were are asked to both suspend our disbelief and maintain absolute conviction simultaneously) as a space where this kind of ambiguous exchange might take place.

If the philosophical ideas I have touched on are somehow in parallel to this work but not exactly practically applicable, how then might the process evolve? I contest that now, during a global pandemic which has quite literally removed us *from* each other, our identities are being determined or reconfigured in relation to narratives *of* each other. That is to say, the removal of even the most basic of interactions and encounters has placed a greater emphasis on the importance of their representation somehow at this pivotal moment of 'discursive instability, revision and refinement' (Smith 2011, p.5).

4.3 The Hyphen occupies the Third Space

Hyphen theory, and how it can encapsulate the multifarious and changing nature of the between spaces of identity remains central to my praxis because it allows for identities and roles in flux. Whilst my intention had been to make specific reference to it in relation to cultural identity, over time hyphen theory also accommodated the many facets of my own journey within the work. Michelle Fine scrutinises methodologies of qualitative research which have contributed to the re-colonisation of the subjectified, thus furthering reductive Self/Other linguistics of social domination with particular regard to Third World and post-colonial societies (1994, p.70). This recolonising can happen in a number of ways during the process – in the speaking "of" and "for" a subject; in the selective erasure of stories and experiences; in the relaying of stories and experiences back to the subject in new or more socially acceptable ways. Whilst timely, in some circumstances, to seek to move beyond the standard postcolonial discourses of having the right to tell a story, ownership or appropriation, these discourses cannot be done away with entirely as acts of cultured and gendered privilege are still very much alive. Instances of colour-blind casting or the engagement of cultural consultants to productions are still too new to count as embedded norms. Maybe the norm must be reimaged to include 'small gestures of participation' until such time as contemporary theatre can begin to really dissect the ethical exchange between actor and spectator (Freeman 2017, p.112). Then the question becomes about how to retain the amorphous magic of theatre, without reducing it to an exercise in political correctness.

Narratives about Others often both inscribe and resist Othering (1994, p.73), an examination of the processes of qualitative research is always necessary. This statement is reminiscent of my experience with Andrea Sherlock, later documented in Chapter 5.4: Blindspot. Researchers work *at* the hyphen, at the points of complex intersection, where both the uncertainty of the material and the pluralities of researcher / participant identities can often be more authentically accommodated than traditional fieldwork approaches have allowed (Fine 1994, p.75). In transforming the data from interview to script, alternative ways of interrupting binary Self / Other, insider / outsiderness norms must be sought. These alternatives should be fluid enough to flex in the relaying of multi-vocal and multi-political narratives. Acknowledging the ambiguity of the hyphen space ultimately opens the work up to greater scope for interruption of previously held assumptions and so conceivably leading to the dismantling of negative representations (Jones 2002; Fine 1994). In hindsight, I can see the moments where this kind of reflexivity occurred during my own data gathering and play-making process, though sometimes this fluidity was uncomfortable – the difficult but transformative moments of criticism of the work, and the questioning of my motivations by those same critics. Sometimes these experiences were unnerving because of the responsibility I felt in shaping the biographical material entrusted to me. The authority of authorship became about maintaining a lightness of editorial touch so as to stay somewhat true to some established principles of testimony theatre and ethnodrama, whilst also making theatre that moved beyond the limitations of the documentary form. Greenwood says that in these liminal third spaces an unscripted mutual trust, entangling the creativity of both the researcher and participants, is the desired outcome (2010, p.4). Fine confirms that qualitative research at the hyphen reveals our partialities and pluralities (1994, p.79). Through a process of interruptions, working and reworking my own hyphens in the numerous roles I occupied within this praxis, I attempted to reveal something more authentic about Irish identity, and about myself in relation. See also Reflections from a Fever Dream III: Towards a Third Space Theatre for more on this.

Similar to late 20th century hyphen theory was Homi Bhabha's 'third space' regarding the reverse colonisation of certain cities in the UK. In these communities the dominant postcolonial population became that of the migrant (often Asian) who soon out-numbered the native English population. In time these communities would become acculturated versions of their new identities but Bhabha suggests that in postcolonial melting pots such

as inner city London, Manchester and Birmingham, whitewashing terms like multiculturalism and diversity ultimately lead to the polarisation, not the inclusion, of cultures. Instead the hybrid should be sought out as an acknowledgment of the meeting space *inbetween* cultures (Bhabha 1994, p.56). This is Bhabha's third space of cultural liminality that it speaks to a very particular set of social circumstances in the aftermath of postcolonialism. However, a wide-angle application of this idea of alternative spaces at the convergence between cultures correlates with the broader concerns of this research project. With specific reference to theatre, Greenwood describes third space portals as an opportunity which 'comes into being when two cultures meet and interact' (2005, p.4). Making a piece of work about the interaction of one culture different from another means I must own the possibility that I too might contribute to negative distancing of one or both groups. Cahoone confirms this saying:

> A phenomenon maintains its identity in semiotic systems only if other units are represented as foreign or 'other' through a hierarchical dualism in which the first is 'privileged' or favored while the other is deprivileged or devalued in some way.
>
> (2003 p.238)

Around the same time that Bhabha was formulating these ideas in relation to postcolonial experience, postmodernist theatre director Eugenio Barba was formulating his own idea of what encounters in third spaces might be – 'Third Theatre'. Barba's approach to the idea of a shared territory of new meaning was very much focused on practice and combining training methodologies from a myriad of traditions. From the eclectic entanglement of these culturally diverse practices, most influentially the Indian martial art of *Kathakali*, Barba evolved a system of actor training that was anthropologically and corporally located.

The other focus of third theatre is relationships: intra-group, between groups, and the relationship with the audience. This outlook has its roots in the sociological idea of the individual's role within a collective society (Watson 2005, p.20). Barba applied the term 'Barter' to his work in the early 1970s whereby theatre was viewed as a commodity to be exchanged between audience and performer. Watson continues, '(f)or members of the third theatre, content and form are often less important than a group's socio-cultural philosophy and how that philosophy is realised in its daily work and reflected in its productions' (Ibid., p.21). Under the barter system, performances were 'exchanged'

between members – a play for a song, dance or poem, a display of training techniques amongst others. In this way the performance, spectatorship and learning are cyclical and cooperative, and performative events are organically created and move beyond traditional sites of performance. Barba's working methods were hugely evocative of postmodernist creative thinking – the collective as a multidisciplinary entity without formal training; a methodology that looked East for inspiration; alternative sites and modes of performance were sought as early fringe theatre. But his evolving methods were not without criticism. Most surprising of these perhaps was the idea that the term Third Theatre held connotations of extracting from the third world, and at the same time held a discriminatory disdain for conventional ways of making theatre, or societal conventions in general. Barba always refuted the idea that the term was intended negatively with regard to the third world, or that it had any relevance to the third world at all. However, later in his career he revised his definition of the term so as to lay to rest any remaining criticisms. Of the contemporary Third Theatre of the 1990s Barba said, '[t]he essential character of the Third Theatre is the autonomous construction of meaning which does not recognize the boundaries assigned to our craft by the surrounding culture' (Barba 1991 cited in Watson 2005, p.20).

This arts practice research attempts to renegotiate conversations about identity by placing less emphasis on the conventions of theatre narrative, instead favouring the clarity of new voices and alternative perspectives. It would be untruthful to suggest that the play does not set the subject as apart and different, but it also signifies that I, too, am apart and different in the awkward navigation of identity acting as a representative of the audience's experience. It is important to say that whilst Jewish people in Ireland may not feel *different per se*, I have experienced people talking about them *differently*. A number of the personal accounts in *HSWR* reflect this experience of difference and come to navigate what Fine calls the poststructural Self, redefining their internal and external borders of cultural and religious identity as a result (1994, p.72). Equally, by inserting myself as Other, the aim was to open up a third space of meaning where untold stories, both mine and theirs, could be brought forward and shared. Weaving my own hyphens and intersections into these stories is an attempt to acknowledge that whilst I in no way own these stories I am very much part of them, as they are of me. To quote Hall, 'Only when there is an Other can you know who you are' (1991, p.16). Jewish lives have been portrayed on the Irish stage, but it has never been with any great frequency relative to the size of the community, or their contribution to Irish life, or in any nuanced detail. The issue is addressed either by Romantic or stereotypical allusion, or by the inclusion of

some secondary character or tertiary plot. Irish-Jewish experience is rarely ever the central concern of Irish theatre with Jewish characters (See Chapter 8 for more on representation).

Why is this? What are Irish audiences missing by overlooking these stories? The lack of transcultural polyphony on the Irish stage means that ultimately the idea of holding a mirror up to ourselves, an adage so often accompanying conversation on the efficacy of theatre as a medium, is a fallacy. But this is changing, gradually. The numbers of plays and theatre companies focussing on issues of LGBTQ rights has seen the most notable increase, thanks to the work of playwright / performers like Mark O'Rowe, Ann Blake, Shaun Dunne, and Phillip McMahon of the riotously queer THISISPOPBABY. Voices from the travelling community have been passionately and painfully brought to the fore through the solo shows of Michael Collins and John Connors. Disability inclusion is only now beginning to carve out substantial representation through companies like Equinox Theatre, and playwrights like Jody O'Neil and the late Rosaleen McDonagh. But voices from the intercultural peripheries remain more absent than present. McIvor cites Bisi Adigun, George Seremba, Gianina Cărbunariu, Ursula Rani Sarma and Kunle Animashaun as prominent faces of the "New Ireland" working in Irish theatre (2011, p.2). However, given that issues of culture would be considered a substantive stand-alone denomination of Irish theatre, when compared to the more prevailing themes of Irish identity, it seems unlikely. As of May 2020, an advanced search of irishplayography.com did not return any results for Irish plays dealing with themes of multiculturalism, interculturalism, or hybrid identity.[34]

Boyarin states that the very goal of ethnography is to achieve a total account of the subject (1992, p.50). Surely this aim can never be fully achievable or controlled, particularly in the context of ethnodrama due to, say, mitigating factors like the phenomenological experience of the audience on the day of performance. In other words, as theatre makers we cannot entirely control how an audience will interpret our message. But if ethnographers are indeed, as Jones argues, the 'interpreters of culture', then we can at least be held accountable to ethics of fieldwork and to the experience of participants at all stages of the process (2002, p.9). Failure to maintain at least this level of accountability

[34] www.irishplayography.com does not claim to provide an exhaustive search, but it is the most readily available and reputable centralised database of Irish plays from 1901 to date used in the industry and the academy.

might result in feelings of 'bounded isolation' amongst participants rather than feelings of shared humanity (Ibid., p.12). In the case of *HSWR*, accountability was repeatedly declared in the following ways: by offering the draft script of the work to the participants for review; through consultation with peer / collaborator opinion; by my public identification as overall author of the work; by offering participants an opportunity to view and critique the work. It became imperative to revisit the following questions regularly – what way might this work inscribe Other; what can theatre do to accommodate complex narratives of nation, self and Other? There is arguably something of a contradiction in asking an audience to transcend matters of cultural difference through the very act of highlighting them. It is also an act of labelling perhaps to write a chapter on concepts of Othering when the minority in question may not consider themselves as having been Othered at all. Culture is not Other to the people who live it and yet the omission of distinction can be equally undermining (Chin 1991, p.85). To bypass a discussion on theories of Othering, for fear that to name it is to cause it, would be equally remiss. The reality is that Irish-Jewish identity remains well outside of the hegemonic centre of thematic and social discourses, as I have illustrated in Chapters 1 and 2. In order to deconstruct this hegemony in search of a more pluralistic landscape in theatre that might present who we are as a nation with more authenticity, we must identify the gaps that still exist. Taylor argues in favour of theories of practice that link the peripheries without reinforcing the centre 'by adding discourses and emphasizing process and cultural specificity' over 'universality' as a mechanism understanding each other (1991, p.102).

Intersections of Jewish and Irish experience were much more subtly woven together in *HSWR* than I had originally anticipated. In asking questions about what it *means* or *feels* like to be Irish and Jewish, I had expected most answers to reflect feelings of nationhood, patriotism and community. Where the intersections actually arose were at more poetic gateways – being drawn to the vastly different landscape of the places considered home; nostalgia and the reminiscence of family and childhood; music and sense memory. These intersections were delineated through the different world views and experiences portrayed, but were broadly familiar enough to achieve Taylor's stated aim – the expansion of cultural borders versus the transgressing of them (Ibid., p.102). And these intersections were relayed not only through the stories of the participants that were performed, but at the site of the performance itself – in the body of an Irish actor with no Jewish heritage. Weber classifies acts such as this as the 'transfer of one cultural tradition

to another or ventured a welding of both, while also keeping the separate identities of those cultures visible' (1989, p.13). Rather than commodify and exotify the experience of the participants (as has often been the criticism of theatre work that seeks to transverse culture), or make the testimonial material more palatable for an audience unversed in Jewish experience in Ireland, I set out to make a piece of work that was neither strictly binary, nor strictly dialectical. *HSWR* was at all times circulatory (echoing Barba's Barter system), and therefore naturally more fluid in the dynamics of status and power. This is perhaps why I prefer not to refer to the work as a play, in the traditional sense of the term. For me, the work became something of a tour gallery of ghosts. A third space of exhibition, of ipseity and immanence as Levinas suggests (1986, p. 356), wherein my own spectres might be exhibited too.

At this juncture I wish to o propose a new way for making theatre in third spaces: Third Voice Theatre Work at this site seeks out the kinds of developments and collaboration that evolved naturally throughout this research journey between theory, philosophy and methodology as a means to address staging minority culture in Ireland. (This methodology is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 9). I pause this thought momentarily and refer back to this chapter's opening extract from a recent episode of the podcast *Radiolab* which interrogated the idea of third spaces of meaning and learning; the locus of this arts practice.

> In psychotherapy there's this idea called The Third, which essentially goes like this: Typically, we think of ourselves as these autonomous units. I do something to you, and you do something to me. But according to this theory, when two people come together and really commit to seeing each other, in that mutual act of recognition, they actually make something new, a new entity that is their relationship [...] And I think now that is my calling. That as a journalist, as a storyteller, as just an American living in a country struggling to hold, that every story I tell has got to find the third. That place where the things we hold as different resolve themselves into something new.
>
> (WNYC Studios 2020, 00:13:19)

Chapter 5: The Map and The Story - The Map

This chapter serves as the first of a two-part breakdown of the research practices and outcomes involved in making the play, *Here Shall We Rest.* Trimingham argues that whilst creative practitioners can find the application of a rigorous methodology to their processes challenging, a methodology is needed nonetheless because it 'underpins research and gives credibility to research outcomes' (2002, p.55). The chapter examines in particular the field methodologies employed in the data gathering period and provides an overview of some problems encountered during the collection and application of the diverse source material that constitutes this practice research. Chapter 7: The Story, reflects on the evolution of the practice from raw data to ethnodrama, to drama.

In his paper *Interventions and Radical Research*, Dwight Conquergood signals two modes of navigation which differentiate performance research from other types of knowledge gathering - 'one official, objective and abstract - "the map"; the other one practical, embodied and popular – "the story"'(2002, p.145). Employing Conquergood's metaphor in framing the methodological peregrinations of my research , "the map" comes to symbolise the choices and voices that emerged in the collection and coding of the raw data, whilst "the story" outlines the interpretive, play-making and performative aspects of the project. Kershaw suggests the bridging of knowledges in practice research in the performing arts. He notes that such work:

> […] pursues hybrid enquiries combining creative doing with reflexive being, thus fashioning freshly critical interactions between current epistemologies and ontologies.
>
> (2011, p.64)

The interplay between these two research positions through Conquergood's image of the map and the story also evokes a hybrid or conduit positionality on the part of the researcher / maker / performer utilising a practice research methodology. That is to say, a conduit being a channel for the transmission of information from one source to another. So, the practice researcher, engaged in the processes of extracting raw data and bringing

this to life in a theatrically vivid way, requires multiple skill sets which must be open, fluid, interchangeable and evolutionary. Conduit positionality, my own term, requires a degree of transmutation in working the constant tension between the traditionally opposed roles of academic and artist; head and heart. This shapeshifting nature of practice research also evokes the ephemerality of many of the wider themes of this thesis and the play. The liminal existence of the figure of the Dybbuk; the absence of the Jewish voices on the Irish stage; hauntological notions of the past in sync with the present; a Levinasian invocation of the Divine embodied in the face of the stranger (See Chapter 4: Becoming Other). Shared characteristics of transience and telling which accompany both the Jewish and Irish experience entangle themselves with Conquergood's dual metaphor of fact and folklore. Lastly, and in the most literal sense, the actor is a conduit for stories of those not present.

It is important to note that my sense of positionality was developed in relation to the context of my particular research questions, the research participants, and the type of arts practice research that was created as the culmination of these variables. The methodological process which evolved during this investigation, which prioritises modes of active listening to lend authenticity and develop representations (See Chapter 9: Third Voice Theatre), might not necessarily be entirely applicable in other contexts. Neither might my performance and my experience of that performance form part of future explorations in staging minority culture. However the fact that I lived out as many of the stages of this research as was possible, from inception to practice, provided me with unique insights into subjects like privilege and bias, and on the experience of the actor as "voice" of the Other, thus enabling me to immersively experience this idea of conduit positionality. The insights I gained were moulded by the muscle memory of anxieties I experienced on this journey and then expressed through the anxieties of the composite Dybbuk character (See Reflections III: Performing Dybbuks). The dual-processes of arts practice research lend themselves to developing further this sense of conduit positionality in allowing the personal, embodied insights of the researcher/maker to be included and validated. Such insights were previously limited to two-dimensional artefacts of documentation, which in this case would have been a wholly incomplete account of the curator's experience with the material from page to stage. Graeme Sullivan refers to this as the intuition of the artist in adopting 'the dual roles of the researcher and the researched' in a process that inevitably changes all perspectives it encounters, 'because creative and critical enquiry is a reflexive process' (Smith & Dean 2009, p.51); a conduit process.

5.1 Research Ethics

The process of gathering the material used to make the performance at the heart of this research combines a number of ethnographic methods of data collection – informal chats; structured conversation-based interviews; observation in the field; analysis and use of other types of recorded material. Prior to undertaking any field work I received MIC Research Ethics Committee clearance in May 2016 (application number A16-029) to conduct and record interviews. Any information collected from interviews is now stored on an encrypted, password protected file to which only I have access. The contents of this file will not be discussed with anyone other than my supervisor and peers involved in the critical evolution of the work. All data will be kept until 2030 to preserve the research materials for posterity in line with the College guidelines. With the participant's permission I used their stories and observations as the thematic inspiration and central verbatim texts for both the practice element of this work, and throughout this thesis.

Three documents formed the basis for the initial call-out for prospective participant interviewees (See Appendix A):

- **Participant Information Sheet** (explaining the nature, intention, and mechanics of this practice research project)
- **Consent Form** (to be completed at the start of each interview)
- **List of Suggested Conversation Topics** (framed as questions for the semi-structured interviews such as: can you start by talking me through a typical day in your life; how do you spend weekends; can you tell me a little of your family history; do you keep a kosher home, and can you explain that a little to me; what does it mean to be Jewish in Ireland in 2016?

The road to the realised play began with the cooperation and enthusiasm of a few friends who completed an interview and later provided introductions to others who might also oblige. From these introductions I was able to form a convenience sample based on identity markers that indicated a broad range of backgrounds and experiences of both Irishness and Jewishness. Having hoped to collect data from up to fifteen sources, the

final number of participants was nine. Not all participants appeared as a *character,* so to speak, as was the original creative intention. However, all were featured in the final script in some guise - either as monologue, edited dialogue, or by way of other creative contributions. Most interviews took on a casual and cordial tone and were conducted in a location of the participant's choosing. Allowing the interviewees to choose the location of the meeting was a deliberate strategy to both put them at ease, but also to vary the environment of each interview for possible staging purposes in the arising play. The audio of each interview was recorded and each session lasted between one and two and a half hours. The last document submitted as part of my Ethics submission (List of Suggested Conversation Topics), though intended as a kind of icebreaker for participants who were not known to me, proved to be a sticking point during my fieldwork, and I will discuss these difficulties in some detail later in this chapter. On reflection, there is a perceptible evolution in my interviewing skills throughout the process. Rather than pursue a particular line of questioning to garnish certain thematic material, I learned quickly that allowing people to speak freely around prompts and with minimal interruption from me was the best way to allowing space for unanticipated stories to come through.

My ethics proposal and informed consent form stated that the full anonymity of each participant would be preserved, unless they chose to waive it and disclose aspects of their own story publicly. In addition, participants were afforded the right to withdraw their interviews at any point in the process; this situation arose in one instance. Each interviewee was referred to in the play text by number and gender only, Woman 1, Man 3 etc., with a brief description of some general characteristics and the setting of the interview, but not so much information as might identify the individual. One participant suggested that they had no problem if their identity was revealed due to their existing high-profile role in the public life. In the end, I chose to maintain the anonymity of this person, despite their relaxed approach, instead presenting aspects of their testimony that would be less easily identifiable. I did this for two reasons – I wanted to present each of the voices within the piece with equal attention and I felt the nature of the person's remarkable back-story and their public activism might divert attention from wider issues of Jewish experience in Ireland which form the axis of this research. Subjects often conflated with Jewish identity like the Holocaust and the Israel/Palestine conflict are not the central focus of this work, though they do make legitimate and more than tokenistic appearances in the final play text. I wanted each of the voices to be represented as equally as possible in an effort to avoid over-emphasis of particular messages and instead allow

the concerns of each interviewee speak for themselves and with as little editorial interference as possible.

5.2 "I will be a little old Jewish lady one day."

Whilst drawing up my research ethics application I was influenced by a seminal work of contemporary Jewish ethnography. In the late 1970's, leading anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff conducted a study on ageing and the social interactions of a group of elderly Jews at a senior citizen's centre in Venice, California. *Number Our Days* (Myerhoff 1980) was awarded canonical status across a range of disciplines, according to Kaminsky (1992, p.124). The study was unusual for two reasons – these elderly Jewish Americans, residents of well-trodden urban America, had never been paid much attention as subjects of interest by researchers in human behaviour. The study was, in fact, an unorthodox sidestep for an academic of such standing as Myerhoff. Her sudden departure from ground-breaking work on ritual and symbolism amongst more remote and "exotic" cultures for a study on the perceived mundanity of the daily lives of immigrant senior citizens seemed a risky move amongst her peers. Though the events featured in Myerhoff's book of the same name, and subsequent Oscar®-winning documentary, are particular to a cross-section of elderly American society at a particular moment in post-war history, palpable human universalities unfold through the chronicling of this minority community. Of the work, Prell says '[f]rom these observations Myerhoff wrote eloquently and persuasively about the human need to be seen and the ways in which culture offers and withholds that visibility' (2018, para.5). Myerhoff never did become the 'little old Jewish lady' she anticipated – she died at the age of 50 from an aggressive cancer – but her work on Jewish identity remains some of the most seminal in its field, post-Holocaust (Littman 1982, 00:01:23). It was from the deeply humanistic approach of *Number Our Days*, which exposes with great gentleness the vulnerabilities of its participants, that my early research peregrination drew much inspiration.

Myerhoff's interview techniques laid the foundations for my initial data-gathering process - one notionally, the other practically. These techniques were employed by Myerhoff to, amongst other reasons, fast-forward familiarity and rapport with participants, gaining their trust and a deeper understanding of their daily needs and

overarching concerns. Myerhoff writes in detail about her journey through 'imaginative identification' (1980, p.19). She realised early on that one potential barrier in her ability to read these subject's non-verbal communication was the fact that she was physically much younger whilst the subjects were often at the mercy of physical ill health. Myerhoff embarked on a series of challenges in an attempt to impair her own physical abilities so as to walk a mile in their ageing shoes, so to speak - wearing heavy duty gardening gloves to perform everyday tasks in an attempt to mimic stiffening joints; wearing heavy boots and then walking the short distance to the local bakery; plugging her ears and abandoning her glasses to impair the senses. This physical act of taking on the ailments of her participants spoke to my performer's instincts and the possible approaches to embodying each of my participants. (I unpack this idea further in Reflections II: Performing Dybbuks). Myerhoff states that, '(i)dentifying with the "Other" is an act of imagination, a means for discovering what one is not and will never be' (1980, p.18). It is difficult not to read Myerhoff's tactic as the quintessential iteration of Stanislavsky's so-called Method Acting, where the actor *becomes* the role in question by altering themselves both psychologically and physically to reach a more authentic portrayal.

In keeping with traditional methods of anthropological and longform ethnographic fieldwork, Myerhoff visited the elderly participants on a daily basis for two years. During that time, she observed their daily lives at the seniors' centre where they convened, or occasionally at other locations of their suggestion. The conversations that emerged from these encounters (as Myerhoff has conveyed them) became 'a storytelling relationship', or 'ethno-dialogue' between listener and teller that serves to change both parties through the creation of a story, together (Kaminsky 1992, p.133). Unlike Myerhoff, I did not design a lengthy, one-on-one fieldwork methodology, however I did have the advantage of pre-existing relationships or trusted introductions to fast-track certain aspects of the data gathering. Borrowing from the *Number Our Days* study I asked the participants to choose their own interview location. The aim was to help them feel more at ease in their surroundings in the hopes that details about themselves, their personality beyond the superficial logocentric, might be revealed. And it was Myerhoff's line of questioning in the early days of her relationships with participants that informed the design of my List of Suggested Conversation Topics – questions about ordinary, everyday subjects where common ground or divergent experiences were deliberately sought out.

5.3 Data Gathering

I had initially drawn up my research ethics with the intention of only inviting members of the Irish-Jewish community to participate – specifically that is, those who were Irish by birth, but who had direct familial ties to the Ashkenazi settlers of the late 1800s - the most common lineage for most Irish-Jewry. I wanted to speak with this portion of the community specifically because I felt they represented a kind of cultural plurality that I thought could be interesting to work with in the development of *Here Shall We Rest* as a work for theatre. Pluralities similar to the notions of presence / absence, diaspora / movement, religion / culture which are relevant to both Jewish and Irish histories. These intersections spoke to the liminality of the dybbuk character I was beginning to conceptualise as the centrifuge of the play. During this first phase of data collection my research was predominantly concerned with staging hyphenated identity Irishness-Jewishness (the hyphen space, or Third Space as discussed in Chapter 4.3: The Hyphen Occupies the Third Space). To that end my original aim sought to build an open sample of participants by interviewing only those who self-identified in some way as Irish-Jewish, based on their family heritage, nationality, or those Jewish in Ireland who had acquired Irish citizenship. I contacted these candidates either through word-of-mouth, recommendation, or through online platforms and organisations such as the social and genealogical society – Jewish Ireland (www.jewishireland.org). In the end, however, candidates were drawn from a convenience sample as those who readily volunteered to participate were not strictly of the prescribed Irish-Jewish hyphen as outlined in the initial call-out. This development in candidate type did not impose a negative effect on my sampling mechanism – this group encompassed a much broader range of experience and lifestyle than first expected, although the final number of participants was lower than I had hoped for. These alternative candidates had a profoundly positive impact on the type of material generated and eventually on the overall narrative trajectory of the play. Instead of examining a dual heritage or culture exclusively through the lens of Irishness, the focus of the research shifted to questions about Irishness from the sometime outsider's perspective (most of those interviewed were not originally Irish), which brought alternative and previously unstaged accounts to the fore. Though initially concerned by this change in direction at a certain point I was reassured by the organic evolution of the research design. I had presumed the interviews would exclusively feature an aging, synagogue-attending demographic as these were the kinds of people I had had first-hand contact with. But through necessity and happenstance the actual group of participants

interviewed was widely and wildly diverse in nationality, gender, religious practice, sexuality, political beliefs etc. This group presented a much richer tapestry of the Jewish community here in all its forms, including those deemed 'indigenous' (Wynn 2015b p.187). The interviews reflect observations of a small section and are not generalisable findings. The multi-layered, intersecting and contrasting experiences brought a depth of perspicacity to the work that I'm convinced I would not have been able to achieve if making the play as a work of fiction.

The data collection process was conducted between Spring 2016 and Summer 2018. After a number of early cold leads and explicit rejections of my application for membership to one online group, I discontinued approaching local and national institutions, bodies or organisations for prospective candidates. Instead I began with the cooperation of a small number of friends and my initial reliance on a list of prompt topics for discussion. This list identified some basic points of convergent and divergent experience and recurring cultural themes such as religious practice, familial structures, forced migration; cultural relationships with topography and the landscape, the role of women etc. These points of intersection were ultimately used as thematic totems (broadly accepted as common to both Irish and Jewish experience or heritage) for codifying the verbatim material in the final play text, transforming it from ethno-dialogue (discourse on peoples and culture) to ethnodrama. Put simply, I was asking them to put their experience of being Jewish and Irish in Ireland into their own words, and for some it was the first time ever being asked to articulate these feelings.

These early participants – about four – then agreed to complete the second phase of the data gathering – a semi-structured interview – on the understanding that the transcripts would form part of the play text proper. Some of those interviewed helped to make introductions to others who would go on to participate in later data gathering phases. In total nine people completed the full interviews, with one of these withdrawing from the study before the text had been included in the script of *HSWR.* All interviews were carried out in Limerick, Cork and Dublin in participant's homes, places of work, or in neutral public spaces. Each interview lasted about one and a half to two hours and I recorded both audio and video at each session, though the participants never featured on camera. (The video recordings were only used as a back-up recording and to note the physical details of the location we met at.) I made personal notes during or after each interview, focussing on the individual's mannerisms and the phenomenological aspects of the encounter (e.g.

where the interview took place; the soundscape of the location; what the interviewee was wearing) for later use in the development of the embodied performance. These notes taken by me were kept at a minimum during each interview so as not to distract participants and to maintain the organic flow of a conversation which was already taking place under inorganic, formalised conditions. We talked about what it means to be Irish and Jewish, the spaces in between these cultures, food, prayer and spirituality, the politics of Israel and Palestine, and many other topics which arose freely.

Inevitably these meetings slipped into warm and free casual chat, the kind we were used to in our relationship as friends. This pre-established rapport allowed for a degree more intimacy and freedom of speech during this second phase of data collection. In instances where I met a participant for the first time, I was able to establish rapport quickly enough to facilitate the needs of the interview. I sometimes got the impression that this was because these participants had simply not been asked about their experience before and very much wished to share it. Ultimately the purpose of these slightly more formal interviews was to 'render from personal experience a research account that offers […] a level of insight and understanding into human social life' so as to provoke conversation, not to persuade responses (Saldaña and Wolcott 2001, cited in Barone 2002, p. 258). Tanggaard's approach to the interview process, which promotes language as the primary action of exposition, emphasises that the interview necessitates 'a specific setting for the dialogical production of personal narratives and social life' which 'provides a context for revealing how language "makes" people, produces and changes social life' (2009, p.1499). In as much as possible, I selected segments of interview text that were contrasting in language style, content, and tone so as to best reflect the cross-section of participants involved.

5.4 Blindspot

Midway through my third year of research, at the height of my data gathering, I received correspondence from an individual expressing strong objections to the way I framed my work in both the information provided to participants and the suggested conversation topic sheets provided in that initial correspondence. I had been introduced to this person through a contact's suggestion that they might be open to a discussion on the identity politics in question, given their work in a related area. The correspondence that unfolded

had an important and unanticipated impact on the outcome of the research so I feel it is of legitimate inclusion in this thesis, For ethical and data protection reasons I will not disclose their identity, however I have given them the pseudonym “Andrea Sherlock" and refer to them thus. As with all participants, I had sent Andrea some general information on the project, a sampling of the types of questions that might arise during an interview, and an informed consent form should they agree to participate. Andrea appeared to have taken exception with the line of questioning proposed in the sample interview document and suggested that the questions would negatively impact representations of the Irish-Jewish community. By following this line of questioning the work would, she suggested, reinforce previously accepted stereotypes, urban legendry about Jewish heritage in Ireland, and the perception of the community as an insular people on the brink of disappearance. There follows a series of extracts from our email exchanges between June and September 2017. These are included verbatim so as to avoid conjecture on my behalf in recalling the details of the correspondence. The concerns raised varied from an objection to the singling out of interviewees as Jewish at all, to her criticism of the reductive notion of identity as a fixed experience.

> **Andrea Sherlock (01/07/17):**
> I would urge you to reflect on your line of questioning […] you are probably familiar with the concept of 'othering'. I would just wonder why you might think a Jewish person's day would be any different to any other person's (and how this would be relevant in any way to your work)? Why you would think that Jews are defined in some way by their interpretation of the dietary laws? Why you would be asking each of your interviewees to explain the Jewish dietary laws when you can easily read up on these yourself?

Of particular scrutiny was the suggestion that by asking someone about their daily routine, practice of dietary laws, or aspects of their lives influenced by Jewish law or tradition, I had assumed that their life was in some way (negatively) different to my own; that they were Other. Ms. Sherlock went on to conclude that by using these conversation topics my research would inevitably further inauthenticate representations of the Irish and wider Jewish communities, owing to the perpetuation of inaccuracies and misconceptions. They also suggested that pinpointing intersections of Irishness and Jewishness was erroneous

as Jewish immigrant communities in Ireland were now wholly acculturated and beyond any discernible differentiation from any other Irish experience –

> **Andrea Sherlock (Ibid.)**
> […] identity is an extremely complex and fluid thing, so that 'Jewishness' or 'Irishness' and how these intersect would be understood differently by each individual, and this understanding would vary at different points in that individual's life. Every historical entity or event has subtle elements of comparability and distinctiveness that cannot be reduced to facile comparisons. And those descended from the east European immigrant community are now well acculturated into Irish society - I myself am third-generation Irish at the minimal point. So I don't eat cholent and go around spouting Jewish proverbs.

Having some experience of documentary-making in other media I understand the crucial role of rapport, and hopefully trust and intimacy with participants and the need to establish these as quickly as possible – especially under the conditions of a study like this which posed significant time constraints and the lack of opportunity for repeat interview sessions. The suggested topics were intended to serve as rapid icebreakers between strangers and were loosely modelled on the interview techniques of Barbara Myerhoff in her own fieldwork [35]

> **Aideen Wylde (31/08/17):**
> I intend to challenge the accepted stereotypes regarding Irishness and Jewishness by using verbatim interview material provided by members of the community as part of the performance. This kind of material brings its own risks and challenges, and of course my

[35] In her seminal work *Number Our Days (1980)***,** Myerhoff discusses the methodologies employed in her anthropological study of a Jewish senior citizens centre. Many of the participants were first generation immigrants, not all English speakers. The study was deeply personal to Myerhoff who identified as culturally Jewish but lived a vastly different experience to most of her interviewees. Some were Holocaust survivors, others were deeply rooted to daily worship. Of the work, Myerhoff considered it an opportunity to 'anticipate, rehearse and contemplate' her own future as Jewish woman (1980, p.19).

> own editorial voice will have an impact on the final outcome of the project as well.
> My intention is not to "other" any group negatively but, amongst other themes, to understand in what ways they may "other" themselves, what ways outsiders also do this, and in what way I as an artist can disrupt these accepted stories and constructs […] the questions are designed for me to get to know the stranger, who also happens to be Jewish by their own definition. (I drew inspiration for my line of questioning from Barbara Myerhoff's seminal work on a Californian Jewish community, *Number Our Days*.)
>
> **Andrea Sherlock, (20/09/17):**
>
> Thanks for the additional information on your project. I'm afraid it hasn't really changed my reservations about your line of questioning. I also find it problematic to approach your interviewees from the perspective of 'the stranger'. I would be happy to meet in the coming weeks if that would still be of use but, please, to talk about something more interesting than my typical day or weekend and what I cook for dinner.

The suggestion of conversation topics was also a statement of intent that the work was in no way politically motivated. That is to say, the research was not undertaken with an intent to either affirm or disprove contentious political issues with which Jewish identity is often conflated (e.g. Zionism; personal stance on the Israel/Palestine conflict). Rather, these suggestions were in fact an attempt to declare the political impartiality of the study and instead emphasise its intended function as an exploration of staging minority culture and identity in an Irish context (though arguably any conversation centring on identity could be construed as political in nature). –

> **Aideen Wylde (24/09/17):**
> The conversation topics are a guideline — the interviews are always natural and flow organically, guided by the interviewee and what they wish to talk about. […] I have yet to have a

conversation about food with any of my participants, however I have had some fascinating discussions on the guilt felt by some for not keeping kosher [...] Through the creation of this play, or in fact any work I make, I am attempting to make leaps of imaginative empathy or solidarity with others. All performance is about this possibility, as far as I'm concerned.

Andrea Sherlock, (02/10/17):
I don't feel that it's helpful to approach anyone as a 'stranger' as I find commonality, as opposed to difference (as implied in the term 'stranger') to be a far more fruitful starting point.
Best Wishes…

In truth, I initially found this response to the work alarming. The mutual curiosity and positivity I experienced with those first participants had lulled me into a false sense of affirmation regarding my data collection methods. In asking people to share private autobiographical material I felt that my proposed safety net of broader questioning could work to further establish trust and rapport, I also felt confident that I had futureproofed any reservations that might arise during the interviews, or any moments where the conversation simply dried up. This email exchange was sceptical of my motivations and tested the rigor of the research in a way that although at first, I was confronted by, I now fully appreciate. The exchange forced me to examine the ways in which my work might negatively contribute to the perception of the Irish-Jewish community, and to acknowledge my own naiveté with respect to the possible outcome that audiences might view the final piece as a definitive portrait of Irish-Judaism. At the same time as I had exchanged these emails with a number of high-profile potential interviewees, some of whom I had shared several months of correspondence and face-to-face meetings with, ceased communication with me entirely despite previous enthusiasm for the project. This is perhaps entirely coincidental, and unfortunate timing if so. But this, and the initial impact of the emails referred to here was enough to temporarily arrest my confidence in the wider research aims.

I maintain that the decision to include the list of suggested conversation topics by way of initial introduction to the work as one way of highlighting intersections between differing experiences. Boyarin asserts that; '[t]he conflict at the very core of ethnography and is

that by nature is the distanced analysis of the Other' (1992, p.xv), but that the balance of power dynamics and intent are crucial to an ethical outcome. By taking a step back after this incident I was able to determine some considerations that the research had previously overlooked. Could the efficacy of the work result in an opposite intention and have a negative impact on perceptions of the Jewish community in Ireland? Fine proposes that 'qualitative researchers are chronically and uncomfortably engaged in ethical decisions about how deeply to work with/for/despite those cast as Others, and how seamlessly to represent the hyphen. Our work will never "arrive" but must always struggle "between"' (1994, p.75). In which case, is good intention of any merit in processes such as practice research? What are the specific ethics involved in role-playing 'the mimetic phenomenon of participation' in 'an imagined experience of total activity' and co-creation (Wilshire 1982, p. 26)? Rather than deter my confidence in the project, these objections challenged any of the simplistic and well-intentioned notions I held. The manner in which I framed my work required a substantive defence, particularly regarding my motivations as a non-Jew creating a new play featuring Jewish voices in Ireland amidst a rage of national and international debates around race, identity and rising antisemitism.

5.6 Jews are people, just like us

So as to draw to a close this initial data gathering phase the research I decided to seek out some peer opinion on the direction that the overall practice work in development was beginning to take. In August 2018, I met with a small group of trusted friends and colleagues from academia and the arts to perform a table read of the script in development.[36] Following the reading, a feedback session using Liz Lerman's Critical Response Process (2020) was facilitated. Designed specifically as a way to provide feedback on work in progress between artists, responders and the facilitator, the method has four key steps:

1) **Statement of Meaning by Responders** – whereby they state what was meaningful, interesting, exciting, and/or striking in the work;
2) **Questions by the Artist** – whereby the artist asks questions about the work. (Responders may only answer regarding the question asked and not give opinion);

[36] Each are referred to as "Respondent (Initial)" when quoting directly.

3) **Neutral Questions** - whereby responders ask neutral questions (no opinion attached) about the work, to which the artist can respond;
4) **Opinions** - Responders offer opinions, if given permission from the Artist.

I have participated in the process a number of times on other projects, but for a couple of the Responders this method was entirely new to them, and there was some pushback regarding the ways we traditionally talk about theatre in development and what this method of feedback allows. For creatives this method can often feel clinical and stifling of free expression, when in actual fact its primary concern is the protection of the artist and their work at a vulnerable moment in its development.

When asked what do you find meaningful/interesting, the responses from the participants included: the topic is interesting and uncharted; the use of a voiceover is interesting as a god-like higher knowledge at work; the presence of the supernatural and the links between aliens and God (or a higher power) all tied up together.

> Respondent M:
>
> [T]he Supernatural voice and the way this all links up with superman, and the links with the aliens, they all link with that kind of disembodied voice [of the Rabbi].
>
> 00: 55:03

Respondent E said that, with reference to the overall structure, they liked '[t]he angles of the play, the way it's kind of up and down' (00:55:39). This was significant because it spoke directly to the inspiration I had drawn from the national Holocaust Memorial site in Berlin. Though this idea is not explicit in the text it can be seen in certain design In Berlin (i.e. the raked stage, the grey and unremarkable landscape).[37] Further clarity of the visual world of *HSWR* was expressed in having the tree as the centre of this world, the

[37] The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (*Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas*) was opened to the public in 2005 as Germany's national memorial to the Holocaust. The site holds a major underground visitors centre, whilst above ground a sculptural containing 2,711 concrete blocks arranged in a grid on a sloping concrete field. Designed by Peter Eisenman, the site is intended to be confusing and disorientating whilst also symbolising the organised and systematic way in which the Nazis undertook the annihilation of the Jews of Europe. A video depicting the memorial can be viewed here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zXuURHFzDzE

branches of which perhaps echoing the image of Jesus arriving into Jerusalem greeted with palm leaves. There was broad agreement from all respondents on '[t]he clarity of the distinctive voices in the piece', and the opportunities therein for the performer to show real versatility with these varying portrayals (00:50:18). Respondent D had the following to say regarding how the play and its previously untold stories -

> Respondent D:
>
> It was not something I had ever thought about before; how do you be "culturally Irish". Like, I was trying to map that onto my own existence as a culturally Catholic person because of the country that I've grown up in, but as somebody not practicing and so how does that relate? And so there's only one word, like you're "Irish" which is the nation state...whereas there's only one word for Jewish then, unless you're Israeli, *and* Jewish. And so that was a new idea for me.
>
> 01:03:50

Moving on the next stage of the process, my questions to the responders included whether there was imbalance in the themes expressed, whether they expected to be confronted with the Holocaust in a play about Jewish identity, and must it be included; what is the overall experience of the play for the audience; does the play drive a "Jews are people like us" message? This issue of the balance of representation elicited mixed feedback from the respondents. Some expressed that the representation of Judaism and of the participants experience of their Jewishness had been handled fairly, without being patronising or polarising. However, others expressed more specific concerns –

> Respondent T:
>
> So, I think if you're going to explore the idea of Irishness and Judaism, which I think is what's going on here, then you have to separate out Israel and Judaism. The way sometimes Irish Americans have to separate out the Ireland of now from the Ireland they grew up with.
>
> 01:06:45
>
> Repondent F:
>
> I am not as convinced as perhaps you [...] might be as regards to the balance. I'm not referring to specific incidences within the play that you've written as such, it's an impressionistic kind of reaction. You can never really decontextualize a play in terms of separating it from the time in which it is written, and this is written is the time of rampant allegations of antisemitism [...] so I think the clarity of understanding that's demanded of you in terms of understanding [...] Israeliness and

Jewishness and Zionism is massively important.

01:08:30

The third stage of the Lehrman process, neutral questions, is always the most difficult – humans are hard-wired to give their opinion. However, this is often the most fruitful moment of the exchange too, despite the occasional and accidental offering of viewpoints which were retracted in keeping with the method. Neutral questions asked included: what is the performance code that helps the audience distinguish between verbatim material and dramatic fiction; is it important whether the audience can make this distinction or not; who is your audience? This last question, that of knowing who the intended audience is, dominated the last two phases of the feedback process. It was suggested that because this was a work in the context of academic research, that the audience would be students and academics, and not the general entertainment-seeking public. This idea was troubling to me – the point of making the work was that it should appeal to as broad an audience as possible in order to generate discussion. And yet I was absolutely against the idea of imposing any further shape on the organic material to make it a more palatable or traditional theatrical experience, or conversely a strict work of verbatim theatre or ethnodrama limited to certain expected form and content. Most importantly in following my instincts with the material, I wanted the audience to feel included in this new conversation –

Aideen Wylde:

I care about not leaving the audience behind but I also care on this particular occasion about not pandering either. My job then is to find the final line between that tension. I feel that if I have to spell it all out about, "Well this is what Jews do on Friday, and this is what they believe and so on" then it becomes an exercise in saying that in spite of all of these [differences] they are people just like us, and here's how I tell you [...] I just want the kind of experience and the essence thing to speak for itself [...] Perhaps I care more about the responsibility to the people who contributed than the audience.

01:24:41

By doing this feedback session and in this way it became clear that part of the experience, or clarity of the experience, was lacking for the audience. The respondents highlighted that I needed to find additional ways of bringing the audience into and on the narrative journey of the work. This discovery became a critical objective of the restructuring, re-scripting and performance processes during the next phase of development.

5.7 Reflection – Expect Delays

At this juncture it is worth reflecting on some of the drawbacks of the qualitative process as it was designed and conducted. The first of these was that perhaps not enough emphasis was placed on the potential benefits of the practice being undertaken to those outside of the fields of theatre and performance. My information sheet states that, 'Using the existing body of plays that deal with this subject (and some related literary works) as a preliminary backdrop, combined with interviews from members of the community, I will create a new work for theatre which attempts to examine the complex identity of a minority component of the Irish cultural landscape' (Appendix A). On reflection I'm not sure this statement goes far enough in explaining why theatre is a provocative and useful medium for examining minority identity, or why it is significant that these voices, amongst others, are lacking on the Irish stage. Referencing the work of Dublin-based playwright Bisi Adigun, McIvor argues that the Irish theatre ecosystem is in great need of 'space for "collaborations and solidarities" that recognize and contest "real and respected material differences"' (2011, p.19). It may have been useful to emphasise this lack of cultural diversity, and which remains in Irish theatre to date.

There were unforeseen drawbacks which contributed to the lengthy nature of the data gathering phase itself. Geographical and scheduling conflicts delayed meetings on several occasions. The protracted coaxing of a number of relationships I had deemed as potentially more fruitful than others, but which ultimately never reached the interview stage of the process took away valuable time. The recruitment of interviewees became somewhat of a quagmire of perceived intent, and this sometimes unnecessarily prolonged completion of the fieldwork. In truth I hadn't anticipated the amount of time it would take to schedule and conduct each interview. Interested participants often wanted to meet informally first, sometimes on several occasions, before committing to the hour-long interview proper. I hadn't accounted for the amount of additional "getting-to-know-you" time I needed, though I have no doubt it contributed to the building of rapport and trust in certain instances. In one particular case, I corresponded with a prospective participant for nine months before they ceased communication suddenly and without completing the process. Another interview with an expert in a related field was withdrawn *post res* due to reservations about their identity being revealed which might inadvertently have placed them in the mistaken position of spokesperson for the community, a misconception that they strongly wished to avoid.

Overall, securing interviewees proved to be a lengthy process and more difficult than initially anticipated. I had experienced some hesitancy from older members of community when designing a drama-in-education project on the Holocaust several years before, so whilst I expected to have to earn some legitimacy I actually found that negotiating a way into people's complex and personal thoughts on identity (de)construction was a tentative and sometimes frustrating dance. Without the validation of a solid introduction, or positive word-of-mouth I was sometimes left in the lurch by prospective participants. As a non-Jew I was denied membership of social media groups related to Jewish life in Ireland, and questioned by a number of possible participants in person and in correspondence about my true motivations, and whether the research could shed any real insight on Irish multiculturalism. Having said all this, I was never made to feel unwelcome; more that I needed to prove the merit of the research pursuit for some people. Those I did interview were hugely open to the artistic pursuits of the research and gave of their time generously. In hindsight, I would have spent much less time chasing certain relationships and instead committed to a smaller number of participants, perhaps spending additional time with them for more in-depth questioning, or a second interview, or field observation in the case of those actively practicing their faith. Lastly, my inexperience as an interviewer sometimes led interviews down tangential routes not always entirely relevant to the overall conceptual framework - one wonders what material may have been lost to this inexperience as a result.

In addition to these challenges, I was also involved in the staging of my first major solo piece of writing for theatre (in which I also performed), a musical play also dealing with Jewish identity, *Levin & Levin*. Intended as a modest cabaret two-hander which recounted the fictional life stories of Weimar's most famous male impersonators, the play ballooned into a large-scale fully funded production, complete with musicians, an elaborate lighting rig and a detailed period soundscape, which premiered at the Everyman in Cork and went on to the Dublin Fringe Festival later in 2017. Though the work was the highest grossing new play at the Everyman in recent years, the scale of the work was completely alien to its original inception and I felt a deep sense of frustration that my creative intent was lost amidst the voices of the hugely experienced creative team. All this is to say that although the project also dealt with concurrent themes of Jewish identity, visibility, antisemitism, the size and timing of the project delayed this research by approximately nine to twelve months. Though the scale of this production and the attention it required was a source of

frustration at times, Fitzpatrick suggests that serendipitous events along the journey of bricolage-lead research may add meaning and understanding to messy research processes (2017 p.61). By undertaking the completion of this enormous personal task, I learned some major lessons that 'made sense of' the process of making *HSWR*. I wanted to work alone as much as was possible to retain creative control. I wanted to approach the representation of "stage Jews" much differently than I had in *Levin & Levin*. Lastly, I simply wanted to find out this time if I could be actor, writer/director and researcher, and what this journey would be like.

Figure 8 (5.7): Aideen Wylde and George Hanover in Levin & Levin, 2017

Looking back at the challenges presented by the data gathering phase of the research I am reminded of Fitzpatrick's thoughts of putting on the shoes of a researcher and the, sometimes, improvisatory skills required to navigate the unpredictable and at times messy unfolding of events, despite best-laid plans. The possible reluctance of some participants to come forward might lie in the issue of the over-representation of Jewish experience in Ireland. A dichotomous push-pull exists amongst insiders in favour of, or objection to, disproportionate levels of interest in the community contrary to the relative presence of Irish-Jews in sociocultural and political life. With particular reference to twentieth century history, there exists a large quantity of writing and documentation of Jewish life here compared to other minority groups in the state such as the Irish-born Chinese, or the Irish-Indian community. These multifarious representations of the Irish-Jewish community exist in many forms – biography, literary fiction, documentary, academia and oral history – but the quantity has proved of questionable quality and are by no means

exhaustive insights (Wynn 2011, p.3). In addition to the issue of over-representation, the 'formalisation of communal narrative' (Ibid.) as accepted versions of the arrival and subsequent historiography of this small cultural cluster lacks meaningful critical analysis and in-depth sociological evaluation. In many accounts the group is awkwardly and unhelpfully characterised as either culturally anomalous (a curio; other to both Ireland, and Jewry in general), or indigenous by default. On this second issue, Wynn states that;

> [...] perhaps the most significant attempt to portray the community as authentically "Irish" is the deliberate and retrospective linking of Irish Jewry with key events in the foundation of the modern Irish state.
>
> (Wynn 2015b, p.187)

This overstatement of presence at keystone events in the formation of the nation serves as an attempt by philosemites to amp-up the inference of authentic "Irishness"; a stance that is currently being reassessed by later-generation Irish-Jewish researchers like Wynn. Perhaps David Marcus was right – perhaps there is no such thing as an Irish-Jew, because this particular hybridity has not or cannot satisfactorily be relayed (1990, p.13). Whilst my own identity as non-Jewish researcher / practitioner / storyteller contests out-of-date discourses, it is also accurate to say that my presence as non-Jewish researcher / practitioner / storyteller might bring its own likely problems – Othering; misappropriation of cultural references; further marginalisation; an accidental reinforcing of antisemitic attitudes through ill-considered representations. Wagle and Cantaffa suggest qualitative researchers might;

> [...] rather than hide behind a false veil of neutrality and disembodiment … name our identities in relation to our research participants as a means to challenge ourselves and others to define how research projects are necessarily embedded within researchers' identities.
>
> (2008, p. 136)

Despite my initial eagerness, the pathway through this sometimes-cloistered world as an outsider only truly opened up thanks to the willingness of friends in the community and their trust in the art and the process. My passion for engaging with and re-presenting human experience through theatre and to new audiences was not always enough. The rebuttals and rejections I experienced during the data collection phases, as well as the many welcomes and solidarities, taught me a number of things about myself. First and foremost, that perhaps the biggest fly in the identity politics ointment was me.

Interval: Here Shall We Rest

At this point I invite you to view a recording of the final performance of *Here Shall We Rest* (See link, Appendix B).

https://vimeo.com/317992892

Password: redpaw

Reflections from a Fever Dream II: Performing Dybbuks

4:36 am

Out of the black, I find myself on a sofa in a television studio, made up like a Dybbuk.

Canned laughs, a jazzy theme tune. The floor manager counts down to live. Two blingy women sit on either side of me…

"Welcome to 'Coffee Talk'. I'm your host, Linda Richman."

Applause. Linda Richman is a man dressed as a middle-aged woman from 1990s New Jersey, dripping in costume jewellery and sequins. She adjusts her enormous blowdry, careful of her false nails.

She turns to me – "This is my niece, Ellie (short for 'Eileen'. I know!) Rosenberg who's visiting all the way from Ireland! Can you believe it? I mean, who ever heard of an Irish Jew?! But no, they do exist, just like the Leprecohens! Isn't that right Ellie, meyn kleyne mishpokhe shamrockk!" She smushes my cheeks. Canned laughs.

"And, she's brought along her mother, my sister-in-law, Mary Madonna Rosenberg!"

She air kisses the woman over my head. It is actually Madonna!

"Now Ellie isn't it true that your branch of the family forgot to get off the boat in Ireland? Those poor little meeskites, when I think of them, I'm sorry. I get emotional. I'm a little…verklempt. Talk amongst yourselves." She sniffles.

Madonna nudges me. I hesitate.

Madonna starts to suck her teeth. "Don't make a putz out of your mamola."

"But I…I don't…I don't know enough…"

"I do apologise Linda, she gets a little iberboodled in the kippe in front

of an audience. . Tell the nice people the family history the way we rehearsed it…Go. On!"

My mouth begins to move, but these are not my words. They trip and spill out of me, but with no connection to my thoughts. Madonna is whispering them to me and somehow her script comes out of my mouth, sing-song, like in school. "It all began in 1896 when my great-great Grandfather Moshe Rosenberg…"

The studio fades. The black returns.

Living the Dead

> Grotowski is not so much a person of the theatre as one whose interests, for a certain period of time, passed through theatre, but always with an orientation towards elsewhere. Grotowski's goal, as Richard Schechner recently observed, is and has always been to approach "a definite and particular kind of spiritual knowledge" using performance as a framework, a necessary structure for the performer's inner search.
>
> (Wolford 1998, p. 85)

In the summer of 2018 I travelled to Wrocław, Poland, to undertake an intensive short course at the Grotowski Institute. The workshop, *'From Embers to a Flame'*, was run by local theatre ensemble Studio Kokyu, and looked at some basic principles of physical theatre performance in the style of Jerzy Grotowski's methods specifically for ensemble and devised work. Grotowski himself could be described as the original bricoleur practitioner – amongst many diverse subjects he was influenced by include Sanskrit texts, yoga, psychology, performance of the ritual, paranormal phenomena, world cultures and how religion effects or manifests in the body. Grotowski developed these psychophysical practices at a time when his native country struggled under the culturally repressive atmosphere of Communism and state censorship. It would be false to claim that performance techniques employed in *Here Shall We Rest* strictly adhered to Grotowski's original methods, and many of his former students have picked up the torch of his work since his death sculpting them into new and diverse theories and practices. But this kind of work was a transformative experience in my own development as an actor, and a key moment in the evolution of this performance practice research particularly regarding issues of authenticity. I propose here that some of the techniques related to Grotowski's later paratheatrical – or beyond theatre – practice might serve the authentic portrayal of the non-fictional protagonist, or more correctly, the encounter with the non-fictional protagonist.

Grotowski coined the term 'Poor Theatre' as a way to address the excesses of the classical theatre tradition and its heavy reliance on lavish sets and costuming, props and lighting etc. Poor Theatre was an entirely non-commercial venture and few of the *Teatru Laboratorium* (The Laboratory Theatre) productions were ever performed before an

audience.[38] Most of the trappings of traditional theatre were dispensed with – the technique of the actor was given centre stage, and other than the actor's body, few props were used to drive the action. Grotowski was one of the early pioneers of site-specific and immersive theatre, opting for non-traditional performance spaces such as bare rooms and warehouses, usually with the audience seated in the round. Central to Grotowski's theatre philosophy was the erasure of two-dimensional characterisations and superficial signification through the actor's performance. Peter Brook (Grotowski's British counterpart in Poor Theatre and multiculturalist practices) explains the idea thus:

> [...] the actor does not hesitate to show himself exactly as he is but he realises that the secret of the role demands his opening himself up, disclosing his own secrets…But Grotowski's actors offer their performance as a ceremony for those who wish to assist: the actor invokes, lays bare what lies in every man – and what daily life covers up.
>
> (2009, p.12)

This process, referred to as "Auto-penetration" describes the sacrifice made by the actor with his/her body, and nothing but, to the audience. The actor is expected to allow the moment or role to penetrate them entirely, and in doing away with one's self through rigorous physical training (and consequently with performed representation and therefore false interaction), the actor constantly discovers the character and rediscovers the action on behalf of the audience. Salata describes this embodied process of constant rediscovery as the restoration of 'the thing buried in language [...] occurring initially between the signifier and the signified but ultimately directly between signifieds' (2008, p.115). Later, during his Theatre of Sources phase, Grotowski became increasingly preoccupied with the performance of culture, particularly by those not originally of the particular culture under investigation. Schechner described his work during this time as that of 'a shape-shifter, shaman, trickster, artist, adept, director, leader' (Schechner and Wolford 1997, p.458).

Intense physical work like Grotowski's seeks to acknowledge the performer's presence through the truthful physical responses unique to them, whilst at the same time proposing that these responses do away with the superficially performed. His is the quest for the essential, as opposed to replication – a seeking out of the energy, purpose, or function of the moment as opposed to the application of characterisation onto the narrative. This kind

[38] By the end of his life, Grotowski had done away with the presence of an audience altogether.

of contemporary physical theatre training is punishing and exposing, as Grotowski intended, and it requires huge control, and mental and physical stamina on the part of the actor. I was merely toying with the techniques, yet even at this I found it an immensely fruitful experience. The physical methods proposed by the likes of Grotowski, Jacques Le Coq, and many others are hugely performatively satisfying experiences to me, owing in part to the emphasis on a command of the actor's technique as opposed to the mining of personal psychological material as reference points for authentic emotional experiences. The erasure of superficial significations of character interests me greatly with regard to my own practice research. Were I to develop my own techniques in a lab scenario, they might rest somewhere between the opposites of the Le Coq buffoon (clown), and the physical response-action work of Grotowski.

At the Grotowski Institute, the daily hour-long and hugely demanding warmup (developed by facilitator and former student of Grotowski, Przemysław Błaszczak) is treated as a performance in its own right, without interruption.[39] With a basis in Aikido, yoga, Suzuki performance methods, and puppetry exercises dating back several hundred years, the routine is intended to prepare performers for the physical endurance of a 60 to 90 minute performance, the intensity of which requires complete concentration and focus. Psychologically, you are asked to complete the warmup in service to the rest of the group, so as to replicate the conditions of inter-dependence found in ensemble performance. Breathing is rhythmic and regulated in time with each other; no other sound is permitted during the hour. The rest of the day's work included body conditioning and mobility exercises, breathing exercises based on the Linklater method, and the singing of Georgian and Polish folk music. All of this is intended to push performers to the outer reaches of their physical and vocal extremities in technically proficient ways, whilst maintaining a deliberateness of gesture and decision-making. Only in the very last portion of the six hour day is any vague "performance" practice facilitated and even then, no "acting" takes place. Rather the time is used to respond to different imaginative provocations and conditions, and to refine these until they can be achieved with ease.

The goal of this kind of work is to achieve the real magic of theatre, where unnatural things occur and disappear with ease. The emphasis was also deeply on tuning into the ensemble, neither going ahead nor lagging behind the group. Though developing the

[39] See Appendix E: Notes from the Grotowski Institute for a facsimile of extracts from my personal journal.

ensemble was the focus of this course, the methods employed actually put you deeply in touch with yourself. You cannot but become attuned to your process and bad habits, and this was enormously helpful as *HSWR* was my first solo performance. "Clean up the dirt!", became our mantra. There were few discussions around theatre theory. I asked about the responsibility of representing real people as opposed to an imitation of them. One way to achieve this, I learned, might be through the application of *extasis*, or a state of ecstasy induced by the activity of play to affirm the protagonist's connection to the wider community of lived experience.[40] This was a moment of practical awakening. Knowing that I could not (nor did not want to), authentically imitate the participants, perhaps employing the idea of a state of spiritual ecstasy was the way into the kind of Third Voice performance that I have proposed (See Reflections III). The only way I can describe the application of this idea in practice is that through the process of learning the text and inflection you reach a kind of state of mental hyperventilation, where your thoughts are subsumed by the reflexes of the attuned body. In this state, something else happens – you are truly possessed by *something,* hopefully the essence of the expression of the interviewee in that recorded moment. In other words, your brain is not onstage with you; other forces move through you. Phelan echoes heightened experience with regard to musical performance stating that '[t]he body does not always reside in conscious awareness, but in pre-conscious, motor-sensory reactions' (2017, p.73). In the case of *HSWR,* I tried as much as possible to reside in this kind of pre-consciousness, allowing the words and attitudes of the participants to pass through me. This state of play combines the instincts of the child with the mysterious kinesis of the spirit. It is a sweet spot that is hard to access, maintain, and explain, but golden to dwell in. Conquergood empathises with the difficulty felt in describing and analysing this kind of tacit practice, or intra-action saying, '[p]erformance studies struggles to open the space between analysis and action, and to pull the pin on the binary opposition between theory and practice' (2002, p.145). This work must be experienced, or at the very least witnessed, in order to observe technique in action. I can say though, that the work puts you so deeply (sometimes painfully) into your body that your slightest movement and every decision becomes of microscopic interest to the outside eye.

Whilst undertaking these particular physical experiments, I began to think about ways in which I might move as the dybbuk entity – animal or reptilian-like; abstract dance, or in

[40] Grotowski derived the term from the Greek *ex histasthai*, meaning to step outside of oneself.

a constant state of rebirth from below tonnes of earth. The Hebrew origin of the word "dybbuk" literally means, "to cling to". The use of the dramatic construct of a dybbuk – a dislocated soul trapped between worlds – was a deliberate and instinctual response to the challenge of adhering the lived ethnographic interview material to the symbolism located in Yiddish tradition. If '[c]omplex constructs, such as identity, require a research approach that can explore the multifaceted, fluid and emerging aspects of the lived world' (Fitzpatrick 2017, p.65)**,** then the irony of using the symbolism of the dead, the Dybbuk, to explore our present "lived world" is not entirely lost here. In conceptualising my dybbuk, I incorporated my personal and bodily research journey to date and share visual elements of previously staged dybbuks – the shroud-like garb; white face; distorted physicality and speech. However, this new dybbuk also needed to incorporate its own unique traits in acknowledgement of my unique placement within the project. The liminal spaces of insider / outsider; feelings of inadequacy and "impostor syndrome" as researcher / maker / performer; a desire to subvert or satirise audience preconceptions; the isolation of working on almost every aspect of the project alone in contrast with the freedom of sole artistic responsibility. This new dybbuk was not a malevolent spirit; rather a malfunctioning one, pulled in every which direction by truths and falsifications, occupying the present with one foot firmly in the past. My dybbuk problematises the issue of its own presence at the centre of the work, whilst desperately seeking some sense and meaning, and pinballing from experience to experience at whim of the Rabbi. As the development and rehearsal continued, I noticed that gestures, voices and the presences of other characters I had previously performed on stage in other contexts became present through this new dybbuk. These were present in moments of singing, the way I moved furniture, how I changed costume or addressed the audience. The performance was quite literally haunted by previous roles that had lodged themselves in my muscle memory – a note from my journal at the time reflects my experience:

> **Notes from a Field Diary 11/06/18:**
>
> **This play is haunted.**
> **This play is haunted by the deeds of every Other life I've lived.**
> **This play is haunted by the hearts of every character that beat in mine, and every hand that put their drum to paper.**
> **This play is haunted by inherited trauma. And trauma-trauma.**

This play is haunted by God.
This play is haunted by not enough.
This play is haunted by truths. And lies.
This play is haunted by prejudice and busy-bodies.
This play is haunted by Palestine.
This play is haunted by the silence of six million.
This play is haunted. Of course, this play is haunted.
Boo.

My encounters with Jewish identity and culture have adhered themselves to me, inextricably forming part of my own make up as researcher and storyteller, and in addition to my own cultural roots and heritage. This is not to imply that I have fashioned these encounters as accessories to my own narrative, as "must have" cultural experiences arbitrarily be pulled out for dinner party repartee. Instead, I consider these encounters a privilege and necessarily now part of my own story, even if few tangible reasons for this affinity exist. In parallel, as an actor, I feel entangled with all the characters who have ever inhabited me as if, were my fingerprint taken, theirs too would appear as ghost lines on my imprint. The movements I learned and honed as each of these characters appeared to me at various points in the rehearsal process, much to my surprise – I would pick up a prop with the blocking of Beth from *Lifeboat*, or sing to the audience with the cabaret stance of Bubbie Levin. Added to these inherited physicalities which made occasional appearances, was the grotesquery of the Dybbuk itself. Devising a dybbuk physicality promised not only rich performative potential, but also spoke to the subversion of my own experience of the doctoral research process with increasing reflexivity. My dybbuk would need to loosely reflect the dislocation of some Jews in the diaspora as well as my personal feelings on the treatment of cultural minorities in Ireland, which can be summed up through Pascal's provocation: who is *officially* here? (Pascal 2013, p.10) Lastly, the literal notion of spectres also locates itself within the tensions of presence and absence that I initially experienced or perceived of the Jewish community in Ireland. Hauntologically speaking (See Chapter 4.1: Words and Spectres) the conceit of alternative, non-real protagonist and dramatic landscape satisfied my instinct to play in a theatrical no-man's land where the imprints of history, of past and co-existing narratives leave indelible marks on the present and successfully disrupt 'dominant narratives and relations' regarding just who is Jewish in Ireland (Fitzpatrick 2016, p.10). If Ansky's play served to manipulate the 'codes of an intricate and historical cultural system' then

my dybbuk story would need to at least confront the inferred codes of Irish national identity (Neugroschel 2000, p.19). My dybbuk would also speak to my own feelings of personal obfuscation at times during this research. Whilst my intention hadn't originally been to create a work that incorporated embodied responses to the doctoral research process, it was evident that the feeling of being both obliterated, whilst at the same time taken over by the work, married intensely to the poetic symbolism of ghosts, possession and third spaces of identity.

There is a sort of foreshadowing that accompanies the various iterations of Ansky's play, of the seismic changes that were ahead for the Jews of Europe in the mid-20th century. Though his play was a direct response to the waves of persecution and immigration experienced by turn-of-the-last-century Russian Jews and the dilution of cultural and religious identity therewith, the 1937 film of Anksy's play text is now considered one of the last major art contributions by European Jewry, pre-Holocaust. The dominant atmosphere of foreboding; the snuffing out of lives; the infiltration of outside politics and modernity on a distinct and established culture, are all themes visible through the benefit of hindsight which could be applied laterally to the history of the Holocaust. Irish Jews encountered the Holocaust in somewhat different ways to their European coreligionists through the reports from distant relatives and friends, through limited encounters with refugees, survivors and charitable works. Ireland was a place where incidents of antisemitism left perceptible but predominantly surface wounds, according to the memoirs of David Marcus and others**.** Bearing all these factors in mind, the Dybbuk character proves itself a potent *camera obscura* through which an examination of Jewish identity, and multi or intercultural identities more generally speaking, becomes possible. Simply put, all of these elements collide at a version of the same question – what of the spirit survives the body in transitions between on-going reinterpretations of self?

I don't believe it is possible or ethical to imitate authentically – the idea seems oxymoronic. Imitation attempts to deny the presence of the performer somewhat through the contradiction of the performer's prowess. The stringent dictates of pure forms of testimonial theatre call upon imitation of the subject through the strict adherence to the delivery of transcribed texts. Though the work of Anna Deavere-Smith was a major influence on this practice research, our practice parts ways early on in the use of verbatim material. Ultimately Smith's style of presentation is the work of a highly skilled mimic; I neither mean this simplistically nor pejoratively. Her emphasis in practice is on perfecting

a replication of the interviewee's delivery, visual and aural, in order to present an authentic depiction of the psyche of the person. Though her performances are a masterclass in command and storytelling, surely this technique constricts the possibilities of the liveness of the theatrical encounter owing to the fact that the performance does or is not permitted to change so as to uphold the integrity of the verbatim material. Lyons and Lyons argue that the appeal of Smith's work sits somewhere between 'the illusion of authenticity and the skillfulness of artifice' (1994, p.46), in part due to the active rejection of her own authorial voice upon the text. Lyons and Lyons argue that hers is neither impersonation, parody, or drag, but rather that Smith acts as a screen onto which different voices are projected, producing a third subject which encompasses both performer and interviewee (1994, p.47). Her 'rejection of interiority' through the emphasis on gesture, body, voice and action is a counter to the psychologically driven methods privileged by popular 20th century acting schools and styles, and an account of her presence in the world as opposed to reflecting on the world (Ibid., p.49). However, in the case of *HSWR*, I was aware that the complete erasure of my position within the work would be *inauthentic* given my personal connection to the issue, the participants, and the overall context of the piece as a work of practice research. Instead of trying to absorb myself into the character of others, to imitate them through technical skill, I made it explicit that these voices were present in me. In this way the performance became the enactment of the experience of hearing these voices. Rather than the performance as a series of signs and significations of the participants (though it was also this), it became the embodied transference of an encounter between two people – a theatre of the Third Voice.

Chapter 6: Ghosts and Golems and Jews, Oi Vey!

Tsvishn Tsvey Veltn, oder der Dibuk or *The Dybbuk. Between Two Worlds* by acclaimed Yiddish playwright, ethnographer and activist S. Ansky (2007) formed the core allegorical framework for the verbatim play text of *Here Shall We Rest*. Taking inspiration from Ansky's canonical work, I employed the folkloric figure of a dybbuk as the artistic extension of my own journey through this practice research. This chapter looks at how Ansky's play became an act of salvage ethnography, which emerged as a way to preserve disappearing society. It also examines how this movement influenced the portrayal of Jewish narratives – positively and negatively – during the period when Ansky penned his version of the folktale. Some of the narrative tropes and social contexts of the play itself are explored for possible points of intersection with my own investigation. Lastly, this chapter maps aspects of my personal journey within this material and considers feminist perspectives and also folklore-as-format for developing an artistic response to this research question.

6.1 To salvage, or not to salvage...

Perhaps one of the biggest representational concerns during this process was the possibility of what Clifford cautions against - acts of salvage, or salvage ethnography which though well-intentioned, can result in the fetishization of the subject (1988, p.202). Safran further defines these acts as a supposition on the part of the inquirer that the subject in question requires some 'preservation, redemption and representation' (2000, p.762). In relation to the particular context of Jewish studies and Jewish identity, the roots of this concept emanate from the latter stages of The Jewish Enlightenment which occurred between the late 1770s to 1880s. During this period of religious exploration certain influential rabbis encouraged their followers to study subjects outside of sacred texts. The study of the arts and sciences, they argued, would thus promote a deeper and more rational exaction of the faith and therefore better integration with Christian and secular societies

as a result. Eventually, both the Zionist and Reform[41] traditions were born out of this movement towards self-inclusion in the wider European culture that it had previously been denied, or denied of itself, access to. However, in this initial move towards majority acculturation much of the heritage of traditional and rural Jewish communities across Europe began to disappear from the communal consciousness. By the early 20th century assimilated Jews were being called upon by radical thinkers of the day – anthropologists, ethnographers, theatre, film and music makers – to reflect upon their ancestral orthodox roots in Eastern Europe, and to question what had been forgotten of this culture in the wake of this shift towards assimilation and what of it could or should be restored. Ansky's play was a major influence during this early period of reflexive salvage ethnography amongst pre-Holocaust European and Russian Jewry. Levy claims that;

> [...] historically, *The Dybbuk* marks yet another schism between the old world of shtetl life (the Hasidic Jews of the play) and the new prospects for Enlightenment [in Hebrew *Haskalah*], and especially the aspirations for a new world order raised by the recent Russian Revolution.
>
> (1998, p.221)

Ansky himself travelled extensively throughout the Jewish Pale of Settlement[42] some time in the years leading up to, or during, World War I.[43] His expedition, the primary goal of which was to bring relief supplies to conflict-riven parts of the region, allowed Ansky to document in detail the lives and traditions of Orthodox (Chasidic) Jews who

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[41] Zionism refers to the historical movement in favour of the re-establishment of a Jewish nation in what is now Israel. The movement's founder, Theodor Herzl, set up the political wing of the organization in 1897 in response to increasing antisemitism in Europe, and in particular to the Dreyfus scandal in France. The term Reform (sometimes 'New Reform Judaism') refers to a liberal, tradition-based strand of Judaism which evolved in 18th century Germany, but which only became widely popular post 1970s. Emphasis is placed on the evolving nature of the faith, personal reason and intellect, whilst allowing for a lesser observance of formal ritual and intricate daily practice. Owing to its progressive outlook, Reform Judaism traditionally encourages political activism and involvement in social justice causes. Many of the new wave Reform Jews in the 1960s were prolific civil rights and anti-Vietnam campaigners.

[42] The Pale of Settlement refers to a contained area of western imperial Russia in which Jews were permitted to live and work pre-WWI, including parts of present-day Lithuania, east Poland, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine.

[43] The actual publication date of Ansky's ethnographic chronicles is widely disputed amongst sources. Some claim he began the study in 1911, whilst others state he did not receive the commission until 1914 and was conducted over the following four year period. Many sources claim that *Der Dibuk* was written in 1914, suggesting he had collected much of the inspirational material before that date. The work has since been reproduced numerous times as a pivotal contribution to Twentieth Century Jewish ethnography.

had been rehomed there as a result of the social and economic restrictions forced on them by the May Laws of 1882 (See Chapter 1.4: From Akmeme To... Ireland). Once considered the largest known Jewish ghetto in the world, the province was responsible for the *shtetl* or pastoral imagery most familiar in the works of beloved Yiddish writer Sholem Alechim, author of *Tevye the Dairyman* later to be immortalised on film as the musical, *Fiddler on the Roof* (Jewison 1971). Though a return to *shtetl* life was not the desired outcome, many prominent assimilated Jews were of the opinion that the loss of this old world was culturally painful and deserving of preservation. In his major ethnographic study entitled, *The Enemy At His Pleasure; A journey through the Jewish Pale of Settlement during World War I* (2003), Ansky appealed to contemporary Jewish society for the revival of a new kind of secular Jewish nationalism, calling for the preservation of this rich 'folkloric heritage for assimilated Jews, non-Jews, and scholars' (2000, p.767). His later dramatised tribute to the world he experienced during this time was *Der Dibuk* itself, in which characters perform rituals and practices he witnessed, the oral histories he documented, and the songs he had collected. Ansky's intention was for the play to be included in a literary canon at the heart of this new Jewish nationalism, in what Roskie describes as 'a highly conscious act of retrieval' of an increasingly endangered folk culture (Roskie, cited in Safran 2000, p.768).

Though the notion of preservation through representation may be motivated by positive intent it may not necessarily breathe new life and perspectives into previously overlooked conversations. On reflection, retrieval or salvage objectives definitely lingered around the early approaches to this research question. Admittedly this was a naïve attitude from which to step off, one I can confidently attest to have moved away from through the evolution of the practical work itself. However, that the desire to capture or salvage was my starting point is not hugely surprising. In 2015 I was living in Cork where the local synagogue, in situ for almost one hundred years, had been sold and was due to be closed down. Amongst those who were aware of this inevitability there prevailed a heavy atmosphere of loss; a crumbling solemnity that accompanied the passing of the Jewish face of the city. Starting out I was deeply influenced by the decline of the former Jewish pockets of the city, and by the bitter sadness of those who had lived in them and others who could recall them - mostly Jews but some not, who fondly recalled the vitality of the community from their childhoods. These complex feelings were conveyed in the various acts and exhibits of commemoration around the city, and for the curious ethnographer this salvaging of the artefacts and traces of a former world left an indelible impression on

my theatre maker's subconscious. Over time though, my play became an invitation to audiences not to salvage or memorialise but to consider; to reflect on a specific cultural identity, and constructs of cultural identity on the whole. To consider the context of what it means to be Irish at a time when the very foundation of what was traditionally accepted as Irishness was being rewritten socially and constitutionally, and through our own projections of self on the global stage. So as to move away from the idea of salvaging and conservation, I avoided using much of the existing biographical and Dublin-centric material on Jewish life in the 20th century. Instead I deliberately sought out little-known oddities of Irish-Jewish connections whilst presenting contemporary attitudes towards the community through the polyphony of voices in the pseudo-exorcism scene. I deliberately subverted my experience of exploring the subject of Jewish Ireland with others, and the fallacy of fixed cultural identity in the date scene. I also subverted some historical accounts by entangling the paddywhackery of "stage Irish" and the underlying threads of antisemitism and prejudice at the core of these accounts (seen in the characters of Nora Keefe and Man 1 playfully exploring the conspiracy theory that Jews are aliens). In the end, I was not attempting to inform Irish audiences and Irish Jews what had been lost as a result of the disintegration of the community, but to ask what could be found by examining our overlapping histories. *HSRW* was not a lecture on the history of the Jews in Ireland, affirmed through the dybbuk's repetition, "I don't know enough".

6.2 This play is already haunted

Rooted in the everyday lives of the new Chassidic Jewish communities in late nineteenth century Russia, Ansky's stage version was first performed by the famous Yiddish-language Habima Theatre in Białystok (now north eastern Poland) in 1922. *The Dybbuk* is the story of a love affair between Leah and Khonen, kindred spirits betrothed to each other before birth in a solemn marriage pact made by their fathers. But when Leah's father ruptures the pact in order to secure a more affluent match for his daughter, he sets in motion a series of disastrous events that appear to be divine retribution for his betrayal. Distressed at the severing of his match, Khonen propels himself into the mystical texts of

the *Kabbalah*[44] in search of a way to win Leah back by magical means. That night, as the *minyan*[45] celebrates Leah's new betrothal, Khonen calls on Satan in a moment of religious ecstasy to assist him, only to meet with sudden death at the height of his ecstasy. His disturbed soul is transformed into a *Dybbuk*, doomed to wander the liminal worlds of the living and the dead. Kohnen's arrested soul possesses Leah on the night of her wedding. Succumbing to the terrible sickness of possession, Leah must be exorcised by a *Tsaddik* (miracle worker), but in the frenzy of the ritual she succumbs to the strain and dies. Both souls are reunited in death, restoring the true pact made for them at birth, and entangling their souls together for eternity.

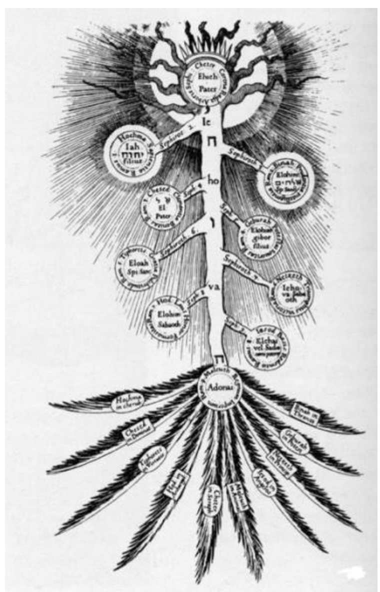

Figure 9 (6.2): Kabbalistic Tree of Life by Robert Fludd - Deutsche Fotothek.

The Tree of Life symbolises, amongst other things, the journey of the soul towards God in mystical Judaism.

[44] The Kabbalah is the mystical tradition of Judaism. Though the majority of texts, practices and rituals are the same as those of mainstream Judaism, these are interpreted and carried out in very different ways by Kabbalists. One of the key points of departure is the idea that God is everywhere and everything is connected; a pantheistic as opposed to a parent/child relationship with the ultimate Divine. One of the symbolic instructional tools of Kabbalism is the "Tree of Life" which represents man's journey towards God through milestones of spiritual awakening (See Fig.8). Study of the Kabbalah was very much restricted until the 20th century as it represented a threat to established religious practices, and because of its take on Messianic salvation and belief in the existence of angels and demons.

[45] A minyan refers to the group or quorum of ten Jewish adults over the age of 13 required for the undertaking of certain religious rites and celebrations. In conservative Jewish communities the quorum is exclusively male.

Ansky's work was, in many ways, a kind of early practice research as the play was the theatrical incarnation of his major ethnographic study, *The Enemy At His Pleasure* (2003). Having travelled throughout the Jewish Pale of Settlement during the early years of World War I, Ansky published both this massive collection of the observations of the lives and traditions of Jews in this region, in particular the Chassids. At the time Chassidism was still a relatively new branch of Judaism, and was seen to been more progressive and revitalizing than the preceding orthodoxy.[46] Zhitlosky notes that Chassidism 'became the source of a multitude of new ideas, and the basis of a new philosophy and ethics […] reinforcing national consciousness […] and lending a new character to the whole of Jewish life and psychology' (1971, p.11). Litvinoff conjures a vivid and theatrical portrait of this vibrant Jewish revivalism describing 'the pale students burning like tapers with the flame of the Talmud in ghetto seminaries [who] were hungry for such intellectual sustenance' (1983, p.8). Ansky himself was one of these pale and burning students, invigorated by the new philosophies of The Enlightenment but conflicted by the restrictions of religious law on the expression of individual freedoms. Again, Litvinoff reanimates this period of Jewish arts, archivists and thinkers of this period as;

> [...] a turbulence of ideas, a hitherto untapped source of creative energy that overflowed into the neighbouring Gentile society and, after 1881 when Russian pogroms stimulated mass-emigration to America, Western Europe and other places, began to have important impact on an international scale.
>
> (1983, p. 8)

Ansky left behind shtetl life to pursue his own goals and expressed these personal conflicts through the character of Khonen in *Der Dibuk*; a passionate young man who

[46] Founded by the rabbi Ba'al Shem Tov in the mid-1700s, Chassidism was a radical new approach to Judaism that encouraged a pantheistic, God-is-everywhere approach to life and worship. Instead of fearful obedience and a purely scholarly interpretation of the Torah and Talmud, this new movement promoted the joyful, even ecstatic, celebration of the faith which included dance, singing and storytelling as legitimate ways of connecting with God, coinciding with continued critical study of the core texts. This new theological departure opened Judaism up to those at the economically disadvantaged end of the social hierarchy and away from the elitism of formal religious study. God was now available to all; even the previously shunned texts of the Kabbalah became divested of their once sinister nature and, though caution was still exercised, Bal Shem Tov's philosophy united 'the worlds of the natural and supernatural' and 'broke down the barriers that had hitherto divided them' (Zhitlowsky 1971, p.15).

goes against the advice of his peers to try to win back his lost love. Ansky himself was conflicted by his passion for Jewish culture and the realisation of a new Jewish nationalism on one hand, and the subjugation of the individual by social and religious norms on the other. *Der Dibuk* is a multi-layered marriage between the supernatural folktale of two souls united in death and an allegory of a religion and society perched upon the liminalities between presence and absence. Anksy had witnessed first-hand the orthodox shetl communities on the fringes of Russian society, and within them the emerging conflicts of a society on the brink of change. Tensions were palpable between the old ways of religious orthodoxy and the new Chassidic lived interpretations of the Talmud, not forgetting the trauma experienced by these formerly vibrant (if isolated) communities reduced to ghost towns by imperialist persecution and mass immigration. Wolfe describes the play as a 'postmodern collage' of material from formal sources and the oral tradition; a mishmash of 'folkloric fragments, stories, beliefs, maxims, superstitions, rituals and practices', perhaps the tools of another bricoleur ethnographer-cum-playwright (2016, p.18). Ultimately *Der Dibuk* was Ansky's attempt to steer wider Russian society away from its ingrained antisemitic outlook to a more unified understanding of the commonalities between Russian and Jewish identities, the aim being to better the lot of Russia's Jewish citizens and preserving of their fast-fading culture.

On every level the play, its signs, symbols and origins, speak to the essence of this research, where stories of attitudes and cultures collide with the worlds of the intangible and the elemental. Ansky's ethnographic study was a snapshot of a culture in a moment in time in the same way that the verbatim material used in *HSWR* is a statement of the participant's experience of being Jewish in Ireland, or Irish-Jewish, today. Kohnen's ghost haunts the world of *Der Dibuk* symbolising much wider themes of nationalism and impending modernity. Wolfe claims that, 'in this way the play reflects An-sky's [sic] own status as "between two worlds", divided between a committed love for his ethnic-religious roots and a forceful desire to break into the modern world' (2016, p.2). My dybbuk haunts and disrupts the worlds of the opinions that exist in some quarters regarding our own nationalism and multicultural and minority identities in Ireland, whilst also symbolising my own journey as an inbetweener in this complex experimental process. If Ansky had set out to rejuvenate conversations about Jewish identity and culture in Russia by reconstructing one of its core folkloric motifs and interweaving it with what Bienstock Anolik refers to as the 'generalized [sic] cultural anxieties of power,

creation, and voice' (2001, p.41), so too my intention was to re energise conversations about the perceived authenticity of Irish identity.

6.3 In a flat in London I met with my dybbuks

In her paper *Creating Spaces for Jewish Theatre*, Julia Pascal raises the question of Jewish art as an expression of Jewishness as an exceptional experience, and how this approach can have a ghettoising effect on wider Jewish culture (2003). She asserts that one possible way to avoid this kind of accidental reductivism is through the broadening of particular and accepted Jewish narratives (diaspora, the Holocaust, religiosity, myth and folklore) to mirror contemporary cultural experiences. Her own work has repeatedly pursued the aim of cultural and historical anachronisms in opening up new narratives and modes of storytelling. Hoffman verifies the merit of this approach as a way of deconstructing the reductivity of Jewish narratives stating that;

> [...] just as the Jewish diasporic experience can serve as an interesting template for the understanding of contemporary multicultural societies, so the experience of multiculturalism can throw an interesting light on Jewish history and possibly modify our sense of Jewish exceptionality.
>
> (Hoffman in Pascal 2003, p. 73)

Bearing this approach in mind, the idea of using Ansky's *Der Dibuk* as a conceptual framework for this research and its related questions was born late in the summer of 2016 when I travelled to London to meet with acclaimed playwright, theatre director, journalist and academic Dr. Julia Pascal at her home. Pascal, the first ever female director at the National Theatre, self-describes as Jewish-atheist and has developed a significant body of work which focuses on Judaism and its consequent hybrid identities, of which Pascal herself is a complex product. To digress momentarily – Pascal was born and raised in Manchester. Her grandmother was a Yiddish-speaking Lancastrian; her father a Welsh-born Irish-Jew with a broad Dublin accent. Pascal claims to be intrigued by her own 'double culture of northern English and Eastern European Jewish' (Ibid., p.74). She too crafted a dybbuk story as part of the *Holocaust Trilogy* plays – *Theresa; A Dead Woman On Holiday*; *The Dybbuk* (Pascal, 2000). In *Theresa*, Pascal explores the true story of a Jewish refugee from WWII, and the collusion by the British authorities in Guernsey with the Gestapo that brought about her detention. This controversial hidden history play is

still banned in the Channel Islands today. *A Dead Woman on Holiday* takes place during the Nuremberg Trials and follows the affair between a French-Jewish translator for the trials and a Catholic American soldier. The play is a meditation on survivor's guilt, adultery and personal morality in the wake of the trauma of WWII. Lastly the plot of Pascal's *The Dybbuk* (1992) centres on present-day Judith, a British woman on holiday in Germany who, wrestling with the gaps left in her own identity by the Holocaust, imagines herself in a Jewish ghetto in 1942 on the eve of her transportation to a concentration camp. She explains some of these feelings for the audience in the prologue:

> My own antisemitism? I don't even believe in God, so what makes me a Jew? They don't talk of such things in my family. Keep your head down. Be British, be cool, be part of the crowd.
>
> More and more I think about my family who vanished. I wonder what happened to them. I imagine them in a ghetto in Vilna or maybe in Warsaw or Lodz. I know it sounds strange but I am haunted by faces, different accents, different bodies, all the lost cousins and aunts and uncles who I want to have known.
>
> [...] They say that a person can be filled with the soul of another and that soul, which has died too early, is a dybbuk, but I, I, I, have so many dybbuks.
>
> (Pascal 2000, p.103)

The woman imagines her fellow detainees, some of those her own family members, and makes them re-enact parts of their stories for her, the overarching narrative posing fundamental questions about how and what stories are allowed to survive in the face of certain destruction. In the context of British-Jewish identity, many of these issues had yet to be addressed at the time the play was first produced. Pascal's website quotes the 1992 review of the original production Lyn Gardener (*The Guardian*) describes the play as;

> [...] an urgent play for today - a timeless drama that reaches back into the rituals of the past and looks forward into the ashes of the 20th century...and comes up with something distinctly and refreshingly un-British. Purists will no doubt argue that Ansky's original has been subsumed, but this is genuinely creative work...
>
> (Pascal n.d.)

During that short but impactful time in Pascal's redbrick classically Victorian London flat, we discussed many things - her own family history and her Irish heritage. I told her of my very real and embodied reaction to the energy in the earth of Jerusalem, electrifying and unlike the energy of any other city I had visited. We acknowledged how ghost voices

from our pasts whisper to our present and future selves, in a sentiment that echoes Fitzpatrick's work on family heritage (See Introduction 0.2) I expressed concerns about being seen as an exploitative outsider to Jewish culture, as well as ideas about how I might weave my own experiences from the journey into the narrative. Pascal suggested I ask this question as I continued with the research process: why make theatre to be politically correct and so as not to offend? Lastly, we discussed the use of mythology and folk narratives as a base framework onto which contemporary stories might be superimposed.

I deeply regret not recording our meeting, a rookie ethnographer's error. However, in thrashing out ideas from my notes in the aftermath, I was able to draw one particularly significant conclusion. By removing the interview material from its real and true-life context, placing it instead in a supernatural nowhere, I could credibly and ethically justify my position as the teller despite the fact that most of these stories are outside my personal and cultural frame of reference. In the world of this dybbuk there is no hierarchy of power, or keeper of stories – all voices are present together and equal (including making sure that the parameters of this elevated world were relational for the audience too). Verbatim theatre director Alecky Blythe speaks about the inherent tension in documentary work between not interfering with the 'unwieldy nature' of natural speech and story whilst satisfying some of the dramatic needs of the work, through the occasional shaping and fictionalising of some aspects of the material (Hammond and Steward 2008, p.102). In the case of *HSWR* the fictional shaping of the verbatim material to fit this fictional landscape seemed to emanate from deep within the subject matter of Jewish identity. Whilst the trope and its extended meanings are culturally specific but the wider thematic implications like dispersal, confusion, uncertainty, longing/belonging, even "imposter syndrome" actually became universal for the audience.

My meeting with Pascal ultimately morphed into a generalised depiction of our exchange in the final script of *HSWR* through the Rabbi who is a composite character of the many outside voices, both encouraging and critical, that I encountered on my journey. The Rabbi's expert knowledge confronts the Dybbuk's rudimentary understanding of Judaism in either instructive, playful, or sardonic ways, whilst the Dybbuk always playing catch up to their expertise. Like, for example, at the beginning of the play when the Rabbi tests the Dybbuk's knowledge to assess what kind of journey is necessary.

Rabbi: All will become clear in time…But first! A test to determine your readiness for the road ahead.

The Mastermind theme tune kicks in. A sharp spotlight blinds the Dybbuk.

Dybbuk: Wait! I don't want to do a test! I don't... I don't know enough. HELLO?!

Juxtaposed with the Rabbi's confident knowledge is the anguish experienced by the Dybbuk, or more accurately, my personal dybbuks. In *The Path to the Dybbuk* Polish director Krzysztof Warlikowski claims that Ansky's play is just 'an old, Jewish legend, because the dybbuks are among us here [...] Each of us has our own dybbuk: our obsessions, anguish, traumas[...]'(Jamieson 2015, para.7). His statement reflects perfectly the manner in which I was able to use the multi-layered symbolism of the Dybbuk to reflect my own anxieties associated with this research undertaking. The Dybbuk's default emotional states of disorientation, unfamiliarity, doubt, unsettlement experienced are exactly the feelings I experienced at many stages when doubting the process, or when the merits of the process were doubted by others. The Dybbuk is typically pale and drawn, only half alive. But the Dybbuk's journey also contains inherent resolution and redemption. It is simply not possible for this dislocated soul to remain trapped in its liminality forever – it must be exorcised or must leave its host on their death. In the same way I recognised that I could not be unchanged by this journey; that whatever I learned would release me from some of my own doubts and lead me to a rebirth too.

The exchanges between the Rabbi (teacher/guide) and Dybbuk (student) characters continually punctured the verbatim text and semi-fictional vignettes in *HSWR* and were directly haunted by Pascal's insightful questioning of my work. These interjections serve to drive the momentum of the Dybbuk's journey on for the audience in their understanding what it is to truly be *of* something, or somewhere, or of some tribe perhaps. Meeting with Julia Pascal was formative and intimidating, but above all it was a generous encounter that had a profound impact on the shape of my practice. Looking back, I can see that the roots of *HSWR* took shape in that brief encounter in her living room, and how

questions that would continue to haunt the process were present from these very earliest moments of enquiry. Those difficult questions turned out to be *my* dybbuks, as Warlikowski says, which would not rest without my continued attention.

6.4 Dybbuks versus Golems?

Outlining the final totemic and aesthetic signs and symbols applied in *HSWR,* I wish to momentarily discuss an additional form possession from Yiddish folklore which directly juxtaposes dybbuk manifestations. The lesser known and more positive form of possession by an *Ibbur* is in direct contrast with the negative, malicious presence of the dybbuk spirit whose earthly life had come to a premature end. Meaning "to impregnate" in Hebrew, Ibbur possession involves the transmigration of a worthy or righteous soul (often a spiritual guide, a *Tzadik)* into the body of a person who is in need of some wisdom or absolution necessary to achieve progression to the next level of Kabbalistic enlightenment. Ibbur possession does not manifest publicly (exorcism, for example, is not required in order for the spirit to depart the host), and the event is always associated with the achievement of a specific purpose rather an act of supernatural happenstance (Faierstein 2003, p.186). In the associated folklore, Ibbur possession is much rarer than those by dybbuks, and is predominantly a benign or positive encounter. In *HSWR,* the dybbuk I created was not overtly malicious or menacing and did not seek to do harm, as is usually the case. However, by taking the essential feelings of this idea I recontextualised the notion of a troubled soul adrift to fit the purposes of the piece. In doing so I was able to explore the difficulties I had experienced throughout my research and channel these into the resulting text and performance. The 'menace' is inverted inwards becoming anxiety, uncertainty and disorientation as the dybbuk grapples with their lack of knowledge, their public exposition, and the exhausting stream of visitations by many voices and opinions. In hindsight, I might have pushed further into this sense of disturbance during some of the more violent, chaotic and playful episodes in the play. However, it was important that the performance of dybbuk or possession "antics", which I had experimented with in rehearsal, would not detract from the central verbatim material and the portrayal of the participants or rather, their essences, which was my primary objective. (See Reflection II: Performing Dybbuks for more on the development of this character.)

At the same time that Ansky's *Der Dibuk* debuted, another monstrous being from Eastern European folklore became the second most important play in the Yiddish cannon. H. Leivick's *The Golem*, written in 1921, was also born from the embers of the violent pogroms that had swept Russian Jewish territories before and after WWI. The parallel etymologies, functions and supernatural characteristics of both mythic figures are almost interchangeable and could both equally have served the semiotics of liminality that I hoped to convey. However, representationally speaking, using the metaphors at work in classic golem narratives, it may have had a very different effect on the perception of this research. For that reason, I feel a brief outline of these considerations merits momentary discussion.

A golem, in both Talmudic and vernacular lore, is a creature created by man from earth or clay; an anthropomorphic effigy of a human; a mud man. Like the dybbuk, the golem is a creature almost human and yet not, and is brought to life by placing a scrap of paper inscribed with the word or name of God in its mouth. The golem will then do man's bidding until such time as the parchment is removed. According to Talmudic tradition, Genesis' Adam was the first golem. Fashioned out of the earth and mute for the first several hours of his existence, Adam only became man when God breathed human life into him giving him a soul and the ability to speak and think for himself. From a contemporary perspective it is possible to see the connection between the golem figure and later man-made monsters like Shelley's *Frankenstein*, with its distinctly Judeo-Christian narrative of unfailing servitude to a higher master.

Just as most versions of the dybbuk story warn against disloyalty and disobedience, so other cautionary tale motifs also accompany golem narratives. Warnings against the interference of mankind with the natural and alchemical worlds (in *Der Dibuk* it is meddling in the forbidden texts of the Kabbalah); the unholy artifice of attempted life-creation (in seeking a host to possess the dybbuk also alters the natural order of the living); the perils of playing God (in *Der Dibuk* this is akin to the disruption by man of the pre-ordained union of souls). Golems often supersede the commands of the master and become wild and unwieldy, as is the case with 1927's theatrical production *Golem* (2014). Set in a near-future dystopia mass-produced golem/servants are a domestic must-have, in a nod to demand culture for the latest iPhone etc., and is an off-beat cautionary tale for neoliberal capitalist societies. Comparing the golem and dybbuk, Bienstock Anolik notes that '[b]oth figures represent unnatural appropriation' (2001, p.40). The dybbuk

supernaturally appropriates the body of another. The golem represents the human appropriation of divine power to create life where follows misdeeds of progress and greed. Equally the figure of the golem as a servant to man's bidding is often interpreted as symbolic of the place of Jewish women in traditionally religious communities (Ibid., p.42).

Arguably both these figures also resonate with the actor's work as ventriloquist (the dybbuk forces its words out of the mouths of another), or as prolocutor (the golem has words put in its mouth in order to carry out someone else's bidding). Either interpretation applies in a metaphorical sense to the "unnatural" pursuits of the actor, who in their work with text and embodiment might therefore function as either dybbuk or golem-like. It is of course possible that the hidden semiotics of either of these figures could speak negatively to audiences about the Irish-Jewish community. I, as maker / performer, was speaking both symbolically and literally on behalf of and putting words into the mouths of an entire community. Pascal argues that in the difficult journey through the layers of hyphenation and ambiguity 'it is our artists – perhaps even more than our rabbis and teachers – who can best discern the meaning [of identity], extract it and bring it forward most effectively in the contemporary world' (Pascal 2003, p.75). Between the existing polarisation of romantic idylls (*Fiddler On The Roof*) and the subordinate status of Jews versus Gentiles (*The Merchant of Venice*), I seek a more depth and authenticity in the representation of a society not widely encountered by Irish audiences, and so I settled on the symbolic function of the dybbuk figure as the best way to achieve this aim.

6.5 The Dybbuk and Female Identity Politics

Ansky's story and dybbuk narratives in general have been reimagined to host many contemporary topics, notably through feminist and queer lenses. Though this thesis does not take a purely feminist approach to using the dybbuk as metaphor, it is important to briefly discuss some of the gendered arguments around its application given the context of my position as female researcher / maker / performer.

The suppression of the female voice, both politically and culturally, is a frequent theme in both Orthodox Jewish, and Irish (Catholic) narratives. In *Appropriating the Golem, Possessing the Dybbuk: Female Retellings of Jewish Tales,* Ruth Bienstok Anolik

discusses how the possession of Leah by her lover Kohnen, in Ansky's play at least, is symbolic of the cultural silencing of women in orthodox Jewish communities both then and now. Dybbuk mythology gained traction from the 16th century onward as a cautionary tale used to control women who were considered socially deviant or resistant. Broadly speaking, orthodox women were duty-bound to the home and to raising children - they were not permitted to study beyond a certain point and were uneducated in written Hebrew. Neither were they permitted to form part of a quorum, the group responsible for the overseeing of important religious ceremonies and spiritual guidance for the community, a circumstance which remains the case today. Elior notes that Jewish society from the late Middle Ages onward 'developed a notion that providential factors were at play in matchmaking' and that all marital bonds were predestined and therefore to be preserved at all costs (2008, p.52). Undoubtedly this led to many unhappy alliances for both men and women in different ways. As a result many succumbed to mystery illnesses, or dybbuk possessions, as a means of dissolving their unhappy unions. She continues;

> [...] in the absence of any other way to resist the forces of the hegemonic power structure, the dybbuk allowed for the expression of such resistance, represented by the loss of control over one's mind and one's body.
>
> (Ibid., p.57)

For women in particular, who had no voice in society and no means to articulate their mental anguish, "possession" by a dybbuk became a means of real by-proxy expression (Ibid., p.62). Bilu adopts a similar point of view regarding the psychodynamic and sociocultural influences on the phenomenon of dybbuk possession pre 1930s, claiming that women were the overrepresented victims of the phenomenon, generally possessed by, or penetrated / impregnated by male spirits (2001, p.332). This dynamic allowed the woman to express herself with the very potent masculine power she was deprived of in public. From a feminist perspective Bilu suggests that falsified charges of dybbuk possession against women were 'tantamount to (though less disastrous in consequence) accusing women of witchcraft in post-Medieval Europe' (Ibid., p.340). In terms of Anksy's application of this folklore with reference to socio-cultural reflexivity of dybbuk narratives, the masculine possession of a female body can be understood as (women like) Leah's viscerally embodied protest against patriarchal hegemony and its imposed mandates. Wolfe describes these acts of possession as women's 'refusal to serve as an object of exchange within the masculine economy' (2016, p.2).

By the turn of the 20th century, as aspirations for a united Ireland became deeply engendered with ideals of Irishness and Irish femininity, the nation became committed to the representation of its women as silent, peaceful and benignly influential Catholics (Delay 2012, p.629). History reminds us of those Irish women who, deviating from social norms in any small way, were accused of witchcraft and of consorting with faeries, or of being a *changeling* - a fairy that had been left in place of a human stolen by the fairies. Attempts were often made in public and cruel ways to "cure" these women of their curses – the infamous case of Bridget Clearly comes to mind[47], which ultimately became a high stakes game of defence of the sovereign ability of the Irish people. The trial of Michael Cleary, and a number of accomplices, for the gruesome manslaughter of his wife was followed closely by newspapers in both Ireland and England on account of its sensational particulars. Anti-Home Rulers, at home and abroad, cited it as an example of the backward and savage nature of the subordinate Irish who, entrenched in superstition and backward traditions, could never be trusted to rule the country by themselves. As orthodox Jewish communities of the Russian Empire appeared to accept claims of dybbuk possession as *de facto* events, so too did Irish communities practice 'well-tested methods that served to quiet those who were too vocal' (Delay 2012, p.633).

Ansky's dybbuk does not appear to be explicitly aware of the fact that it has taken female form. My dybbuk was clearly female, clothed in pseudo-dress or shroud, like Ansky's Leah. The character was intended as a performative extension of myself and my female self, though gender is never specifically referred to. When my dybbuk experienced possession by male interviewees this occurred on equal representational footing with the female voices depicted – that is to say, I did not approach the writing or embodiment of

[47] The Burning of Bridget Clearly, as it is locally known, was an infamous Irish trial in Tipperary in 1895. Cleary was regarded locally as shrewish following an incident in which she denounced her parish priest, and ostensibly owing to her skills as a dressmaker. Her husband, Michael Cleary, was found guilty of manslaughter despite his defence that his wife had been abducted by faeries and a changeling, who looked like Bridget but was in fact a malevolent spirit, was left in her place. The trial heard that over three nights Michael and nine accomplices tortured Bridget in the couple's home in an attempt to exorcise the faery, however it is widely believed that this was a conspiracy amongst her family to cover up Bridget's punishment for her behaviour as a creative, progressive and reportedly outspoken woman in the village. Bridget was starved, then force-fed, beaten and interrogated before finally being set alight - there remains a dispute over the accidental nature of her death. The story has been the subject of documentaries, books and a number of adaptations for stage.

male participants differently to female participants. The spirits or ghosts were taken on by my female dybbuk in terms of the energetic essence they individually displayed. Only one male character was portrayed with the violent hysteria an audience might expect to encounter in a theatrically staged act of possession — Fr. John Creagh, whose inflammatory preaching was responsible for an antisemitic boycott of Jewish-owned Limerick businesses in 1904. Creagh was the only character whose masculinity (nay, fundamentalist Catholicism) might be reminiscent of the 'state of radical derailment and disequilibrium *from which* one seeks relief and escape' associated with incidents of possession (Wolfe 2016, p.10). I considered casting the voice of the Rabbi as female, but the final casting of this role became an issue of availability of actors. There had also been concerns raised by collaborators that a disembodied female voice against my own on-stage female voice may have been confusing or monotonous for the audience, following an initial reading of the script. Despite the casting, the relationship between Rabbi and Dybbuk in *HSWR* was not intended as an exploration of male / female interactions, but more as a satirical play on the possession, so to speak, of expertise and knowledge. This relationship was intended more as a depiction of my experiences as an emerging scholar as opposed to a specific commentary on the unnatural appropriation of the female Jewish voice, as is the case with many contemporary retellings of dybbuk narratives (Bienstok Anolik 2001, p.48).

6.6 On folktale

It is perhaps useful to look briefly at the ways in which the folklore[48], more specifically the tropes of the folktale in general, might play a useful role in examining themes of minority identity. The tradition of the oral folktale was and remains a vital medium for the handing down of cultural traditions and beliefs for societies across the world. The traditions and purpose of these stories vary from place to place, though many shared generalisations can be identified in the types of narratives employed, broadly speaking — the hero tale; animal stories; tales of magic and wonder; religious stories, to name but

[48] In terms of this research I use the general terms of folklore, folktale, and folkloric with reference to stories and customs particular to a given cultural group. These are generally passed down informally, either as oral narratives or through repetition.

some (Campbell 2012).[49] With the arrival of the printing press in the late Middle Ages, many of these formerly exclusively oral traditions were recorded, slowly becoming available to wider audiences. However, they remained unlaboured by literary constraints of 'originality of plot or pride of authorship' (Thompson 1977, p.5), which perhaps implies a universality of meaning, symbolism, and ownership inherent to the structure of classic folktale. These vestiges of pre-Christian pagan ritual were frequently viewed as primitive. But in the mid to late 1800s the documenting (or salvaging) of folktale and folk practices in general lead to their legitimisation as works of literary import by authors like Wilde, Yeats and Synge coinciding with the rise of nationalist ideology and rhetoric. Mythic symbolism became inextricably intertwined with concepts of national identity and Irish nationalism.

This was also the case for Ansky's work in Russia, coinciding with the emergence of the Zionist movement. Across Europe folktales, their thematic tropes, were adopted and adapted to bolster the political and romanticised ideologies of the time. At home, the Gaelic Revival of the late 1800s employed native traditions in its campaign as a counter-cultural response against the increasing metropolitanism of the occupying British Empire. (O'Giolláin 2000, p.4). Heroic figures from Celtic mythology such as Cú Chulainn, Fionn mac Cumhaill, Oisín, and the Tuatha Dé Dannan became pivotal symbols for the intended aims of the Irish Nationalist movement in de-Anglicising the Irish people. Later, in spite of the increasing dominance of the Catholic church in Ireland, rural communities still maintained a firm hold on *seanachí* storytelling (now a preserved artform practiced by few) and superstitious customs, well into the 20th Century. The lighting of bonfires on the winter and spring solstices; *beansí* lore, the tying of good luck talismans to a May Bush, or the strict observation of faery dwelling places are just some such folkloric practices that remained vivid in the essential cultural consciousness of rural Ireland. Many of these customs were still upheld by older people during my own childhood in the 1980s leaving an indelible impact on my creative imagination.

At one time folklore and its associated fields of the traditional, ritual, the local and the amateur were deemed unscholarly and unfashionable (Harrop 2013, p.10); picturesque but not serious; peasant culture (O'Giolláin 2000, p.1). Perhaps, like the continually

[49] A system of classification for types of folktale was developed in the Twentieth Century by researchers Aarne, Thompson and Uther, which became known as the AUT Index, which classifies folktales from all over the world dependant on their similar and recurring component themes, characters and lessons.

emergent field of practice research and its various permutations, the study of folklore remained illegitimate and in academic limbo because the measurable results – sometimes conservative, sometimes radical – are often unpredictable. Structuralist folklorists of the twentieth century deemed the work to be 'particular times and places, each an expression in *parole* of the abstract categories of the *langue*' (Steadman-Jones, 2013, p.30). Adopting a structuralist stance consigns folklore and the folktale to the narrow contexts from which it emerged, rather than a system of far-reaching and complex semiotics that evade formal definition. In the late 20th Century a combination of existing ethnographic techniques (field work, qualitative data gathering etc.) and performance traditions (e.g. storytelling, theatre, ritual) developed into what has collectively become known as the theoretical field of Performance Studies. Richard Schechner's foundational work on performance theory and anthropology 'underlines the ways in which performances could be seen as key paradigms for social processes' (Harrop 2013, p.10). The theatrical presentation of this kind of research and documentation – what Harrop refers to as 'embodying the ethnography through various performative means' (Ibid. p.1) – was later to be coined 'ethnodrama' and promoted a more critical engagement with ethnographic fieldwork around folkloric practices, and their theoretical implications. In his book, *The Morphology of the Folktale*, Harrop raises the problematic issue of meta-folklore – that is, the subsequent repetition of the original work of folklore as a means for explaining its existence in the first instance, thereby obscuring the true and authentic origins of the practice (2013, p.5). In other words, an instance where the original artefact of folklore is revised as an act of salvage rather than to learn anything new from it. Instead, he favours an acknowledgement that meaning naturally changes with the passage of time, and that acts of meta-folklore should instead be a natural deferral from the source but not a complete overriding of it through justification (Ibid., p.14). For example, this reinterpretation of a dybbuk narrative was not an attempt to recover a lost folktale, but to employ aspects of it that are useful in looking at the Irish-Jewish experience in an entirely new way. With regards to Performance Studies, Harrop suggests that the field has a role to play in becoming a constituent part of the greater body of meta-folklore rather than simply an observer or preserver of it (Ibid., p. 16).

Outside the academy, ethnographic folklore has been rejuvenated as a medium for investigating social relationships and hierarchical struggles. Folktale was frequently employed in the rehearsal rooms of revolutionary theatre practitioners like Bertholt Brecht, Anton Artaud, Peter Brook, Jerzy Grotowski. However, usage of this material

often led to widespread criticism that practitioners, though the self-labelling of the work as multiculturalist / inclusive, were carelessly exploiting and appropriating cultural reference points for art's sake. The often non-linear nature of the much folk mythology made it the perfect foundational material for use in this practice as its form, or anti-form, offers multiple ways to present a miscellany of voices that are only loosely tied together outside the context of this research question. Traditionally the folk tale served to de-politicise the peasant population by transporting peoples to the 'realm of timeless superstition […] the otherworld and the living past' (Leerson cited in O'Giolláin 2000, p.112). Given the return of ritual and folktale in postmodern theatre practice and scholarship it seemed pertinent that this research on staging cultural and national identity could incorporate the folktale as a methodological totem. Through the application of the dybbuk symbolism as the framework for the verbatim material in *Here Shall We Rest,* a folktale framework emerged as the most appropriate source from which to investigate concepts of identity in alternative ways.

Chapter 7: The Story — *Here Shall We Rest*, scene by scene

Here Shall We Rest is a fever dream. The angles in the world of this play are distorted – it should be a familiar place, but it isn't. Pieces of cutlery stick up from piles of earth and stones, and a dead olive tree occupies centre stage. Into this *Waiting for Godo*t-esque landscape, a dybbuk is born, violently, with nothing but a collection of random objects and pieces of clothing. A booming, disembodied voice informs the dybbuk of the predicament of being a soul trapped in between life and death. The voice decries that in order for the dybbuk to exit this liminal world of neither here nor there-ness it must live out the stories and lives of others. By completing this ritual of storytelling (the actions of which are decided spontaneously) the dybbuk might finally awake from its fever dream and become whole. (See Appendix C for full play text.)

7.0 Prologue: (Re)Birth

Figure 10 (7.0): Pre-show state, *HSWR*

The play opens with deserted playing space; the audience are very much alone. A kind of scratching noise can be heard, then the disembodied voice of a man – "The Rabbi". Though never explicitly referred to as "rabbi", the character is both a composite of all the teacher-guides who accompanied me on my research journey and a nod to the rabbis of Ansky's play, who pull and push the narrative towards the climactic exorcism of Khonen from Leah. The Rabbi explains to the audience that most of the time the soul passes to the afterlife with ease, but occasionally a soul becomes trapped between the worlds of the living and the dead and cannot be at rest until whatever their earthly unease has been is remedied – this is a dybbuk. Suddenly, articles of clothing fly through the air from a hole in the ground, and one such dybbuk – clothed all in white as if a shroud or a wedding dress – is born, or resurrected, out of the earth. The spectre is disorientated, so The Rabbi introduces himself and informs the Dybbuk that a task must be completed before it can be freed from this no-man's land of nothingness and obscurity, to which The Dybbuk protests that it doesn't know enough to achieve the task. A sudden and severe lighting change transports the audience to the set of the tv quiz show, *Mastermind*, as the memorable theme tune kicks in. The Dybbuk is informed that they are the supposed expert of the specialist subject, "Judaism for Dummies". In the vein of the tv show, a succession of questions about Jewish religion, culture and traditions follows until a klaxon sounds. As the Dybbuk fails to answer all the questions correctly, the Rabbi steps into to help and tells the Dybbuk the story of how the first Jews came to Europe:

> ***Legend goes that when the Chosen People arrived in Europe, as the winds carried verses from the Bible mixing with them Jewish prayer and Yiddish song, these first sojourners came upon a tree in the forest inscribed with the Hebrew word, "Polin – 'Here shall you rest, in exile".***

As he narrates, the Dybbuk approaches the trunk of the dead tree and sees the initials of those same words carved there. The Rabbi calls for their journey to begin in earnest, stating that everything needed for the road ahead could already be found at the Dybbuk's feet – i.e. the objects and clothing it arrived there with. In other words, the Rabbi is trying to teach us that we are already equipped with the tools we need to find out who we really are, and that the enquiry is simply a matter of beginning. The Dybbuk rushes to the pile

of clothes as a shimmering light burgeons from the hole in the ground. The Dybbuk dons a beaded necklace and is immediately "possessed" by Woman 1.

This first scene mirrors my own feelings of confusion, inadequacy and fear as a maker and researcher throughout this process. The narrative, and indeed the landscape of the scene, is informed by my feelings of liminality between the academic and performative aspects of my personality. I use the Dybbuk's oscillating states of catatonia and fear, and the grey scale of No Man's Land both they and the voice inhabit, as a metaphor for the autobiographical imprint of my own journey, and as a literal blank canvas for the biographical stories collected from interviews. The legend of the first Jews arriving in Poland also gave rise to the name of the place. "Here shall you rest…" became *Here Shall We Rest* – an invitation to the audience to be in this realm and examine our ideas and preconceptions, together.

7.1 Chapter One: The Holy Well

This section utilises the first of the verbatim texts adapted in the play. Woman 1, an Israeli with a strong accent, explains how she came to be in Ireland in the first place. How she felt captivated and called to come here having seen the movie "Into The West" as a teenager and was struck by the wild and green landscape of the film. Arriving on a one-way ticket, she explains that she felt instantly "at home" in a place so far and different from her own. The Rabbi interrupts at this point to explain the ancient connection between Ireland and the Holy Land of the Old Testament –

Figure 11 (7.1): The Dybbuk discovers the necklace that belongs to Woman 1.

7.1.1 Vignette: The Stone of Destiny

The Rabbi halts the action momentarily to explain to the Dybbuk that the ties between Irishness and Jewishness can be traced far further back than we might realise. Just as the Dybbuk found the tools for Woman 1 in the earth, so too does it find the next things needed to tell this parable under a pile of stones. The Rabbi tells the story of a man called Jacob who lay down to sleep for the night with a stone at his head for a pillow. The Dybbuk rummages in the earth and reveals a shadow puppet of Jacob, which it sticks into a pile of stones. The Rabbi continues the story of Jacob who is visited in his dreams by the angels of the Lord. The Dybbuk unearths angels and sets them around the Biblical man. Again the Rabbi continues – a great ladder, miles and miles in height that reaches all the way up to heaven is revealed to Jacob and God prophesises that Jacob's heirs will be many all over the world. When Jacob awakes, he understands that the rock on which he had laid his head for the night had become holy because God had visited him as he slept there.

It's evident from the Dybbuk's increasing boredom as to how this story connects to them journey is unclear. The Rabbi apologises for waffling and explains that the stone – in Irish the "Lia Fáil" – was brought to Ireland many years later by an Egyptian princess, who had meant it as a gift for the people of Scotland. Scota, this princess appears as an ultra-feminine cut-out, as does the boat she travelled in. Lastly, the Dybbuk places the Stone of Destiny in the centre of all the figures from the story and the connection becomes clear.

Figure 12 (7.1.1): Shadow puppets (created by Emma Fisher).

7.1.2 Chapter One: The Holy Well (cont'd.)

As the Dybbuk regards the scene, Woman 1 reappears to tell the rest of her story. The rest of her monologue is dominated by strong feelings she experienced of a deep connection to the landscape of Ireland, in particular to the site of a holy well near where she first lived on the Aran Islands. She reclines by the well as her presence gradually fades from the Dybbuk, who removes the beaded necklace to set the essence of Woman 1 free.

The inclusion of the story of Jacob and the Stone of Destiny was an important one for me. I was amazed by this tale when I first encountered it in one of the histories of Jewish Ireland, and it became a useful way of tying the strands of two very different, and very ancient identities together. The use of shadow puppets lent an air of child's play and magic to the interaction between the two protagonists, and for the audience the notion that stories can be conjured up from anywhere within this world where everything is connected and reciprocal is reinforced. The use of these props in a kind of object-theatre mode of storytelling was a nod to the many Theatre for Young Audiences productions I have been part of throughout my career as an actor, and where tropes like this are commonplace in illustrating particular offstage aspects of a story – flashback, play-within-a-play narratives, telling someone else's story.

7.2 Chapter Two: Trapped in the Kingdom of Names

The Rabbi warns that names can confuse things in this land of identity and that perhaps the nuances are deeper, and more difficult to define. Man 3 appears through the Dybbuk, dressed in a suit jacket retrieved from the pile. It sets up a pseudo-classroom as the monologue continues. Man 3, an American academic, explains the formula of a traditional Jewish prayer and how these are used to give thanks for the simplest things like the ability to urinate first thing in the morning.

Figure 13 (7.2): Man 3, *HSWR*

He to's and fro's with the more complex ontological philosophies around being Jewish or identifying as culturally Jewish, and how Judaism has since been hyphenated with other faiths to create unexpected hybrids – Jew-Bhus and Hin-Jews etc. Lastly, he imagines for the audience a scenario where he, a religious convert, American-Irish, Ukranian-speaking, Sephardic by heritage Jew, would never be mistaken for "Irish" on looks alone. But were he to speak *as Gaelige* to an Irish person on holiday in Spain, he would completely defy the traditional expectation of what "Irishness" is or can be. As Man 3 fades, he leaves the audience with a question: "What are the ties that bind?"

This monologue was intended to illustrate for the audience that sometimes, even for secular or religious Jews, identity can be a mercurial thing, and at times deeply confusing. Man 3 practices Reform Judaism and spent much time explaining many of the traditions and customs associated with everyday life and the high holidays for me. In many ways his contribution sums up the overall idea posed by the research – how do we address each other; where are the points of intersection between vastly different experiences. My physical portrayal of Man 3 was the least mimetic of the real person compared to the participants I portrayed. I made the decision to move this character around a lot more than had actually been the case because this person is naturally quite still by nature and for the sake of stagecraft I felt that the stillness belied the energy of the words he was saying, and the passion he was expressing. His was perhaps the portrayal I was most concerned about – the participant did attend the performance but did not feedback any negative commentary about his portrayal.

7.3 Chapter Three: Ham Sandwiches in the Snow

A burst of loud 1950s Yiddish *klezmer*-pop music shatters the thoughtful hiatus of the previous scene, and the Dybbuk begins to dance manically around the space. It is a celebration – perhaps 'it' is getting the hang of this world, and it is vaguely reminiscent of the chair dance enacted for the bride and groom at a Jewish wedding. Instinctively knowing who is to visit next, it grabs a backpack from the pile and puts it on, discovering a lunch bag with ham sandwiches inside in the pocket.

Man 2 appears. He is older, a Holocaust survivor from Slovakia, and walks an invisible path as he enjoys the ham sandwiches from the bag. His is a story of the human side of religion – one where necessity confronts dogma. The winters were exceptionally cold in his home country, and his mother bent the rules of kosher so that the children could eat pork lard and maintain their weight during the harsh winter months. He chuckles as he recalls her throwing the sandwiches out of the window, to conceal them for her devoutly religious parents. He chuckles again as he explains how, though he wouldn't ever buy pork or have it in the house, he is occasionally partial to an Irish breakfast when overnighting at a hotel. Lastly, he explains that the hunger he experienced in the concentration camp as a 9 year-old boy was unbearable and that as a result, he cannot stand to see food go to waste. He tells the audience that the question he is asked most often about his experience during the Holocaust is whether or not he believes in God.

Man 2 is a friend whom I have known for over fifteen years, so this scene was deeply personal to me. In portraying his experience of the worst acts of genocide, I expressly wanted to avoid the voyeurism at play in the spate of based-on-reality Holocaust fiction that has become increasingly popular in recent times.[50] Guardian journalist Howard Jacobson describes these writers as belonging to a;

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[50] A problematic sub-genre of works has begun to emerge, known simply as the Auschwitz novel, and led by popular fiction such as John Boyne's "The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas'. The Auschwitz Museum has repeatedly decried this slew of works as misleading and factually inaccurate and has spurred some very public debate about what histories can and can't be fictionalised.

For more please see: https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2020/jan/23/howard-jacobson-holocaust-kitsch-auschwitz-75-years-after-liberation, and: https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/avoid-john-boyne-s-holocaust-novel-auschwitz-museum-advises-1.4131194

> […] later generation of Holocaust excavators, those who had not experienced for themselves but wanted to speak as though they had, either to berate those they felt hadn't learned its lessons or simply to profit from it in some way – peddling kitsch being the most profitable."
>
> (2020, para.5)

To speak, to represent the unspeakably unrepresentable - this segment of Man 2's interview captures his irrefutable humanity, and the deep scars that he still feels to this day as a Holocaust survivor in ways I felt were fathomable for an audience, as these narratives are often described as horrors beyond the capability of human understanding. The monologue does not indulge the voyeuristic curiosity often associated with the subject – his story is told as a celebration of life and of his pre-Holocaust life, presenting his trauma as the remembrances of a distant child who almost starved to death. This is the man of the Levinasian face-to-face encounter that I describe in Chapter 4.2: Facial Recognition. His story has been of major inspiration to me on my journey through various projects on Jewish identity, his friendship a reminder of the power of human resilience and kindness. He is the unknowing motivational force behind this research.

Figure 14 (7.3): Man 2, *HSWR*

7.3.1 Vignette: Jerusalem Syndrome

A violent clanging of bells signals a change of scene, pace and tone. The Dybbuk roots around to find a scrap of paper on the ground amongst the other abandoned items, and the Rabbi exclaims that we have now entered the city of God – Jerusalem. The Dybbuk develops a violent pain and begins to read, with increasing pace and ferocity, from the scrap of paper. It is as if a diary entry of a tourist – descriptions of the city, the chaos and rabble, flow forth and the Dybbuk is overwhelmed. It is impossible to explain what Jerusalem is and the text reflects this. The volume of the bells increases, as does the Dybbuk's headache, to the point where it has to shout over them to be heard. The Dybbuk screams:

> ***This is where Solomon split the cheque while his guests argued over who should pay for the pizza. This is where David slayed Goliath in a game of Pinball, and this is where Mohammed purchased booze and a packet of smokes too for good measure, which were like, totally for his Dad! Hallelujah, praise the Lord! Shalem! Shalom! Yerushalayim! Jerusalem!***

This section is a piece of original writing from one of the interviewees from a larger travelogue about his time in Israel, and his first experience of visiting Jerusalem. (Minor editorial changes were made to the original work to make it read more as a journal entry and with the permission of the author.) It encapsulated so perfectly the same feelings I had when visiting the city, but which I had not been able to articulate in personal writing. The sensory overload and busyness of the place; the vague and constant threat of violence in the air; the assaulting smells and the multifarious languages; the rocks and walls that define the city both geographically and politically. The scene is also a nod to the transient mental illness, Jerusalem Syndrome, as a way to try to convey the assaulting but thrilling nature of this city where so many cultures, beliefs and opinions collide.[51] And this scene

[51] Jerusalem Syndrome is defined by the British Journal of Psychiatry as a "psychotic state" brought on by "religious excitement induced by proximity to the holy places of Jerusalem, and is indicated by seven characteristic sequential stages" which include identification with Biblical figures, preparation of a toga-

was a way for me to conceptualise some of my own feelings about the negative political situation in Israel. The bells used in the soundscape were found-sound I had recorded in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the most sacred Christian site in Jerusalem. I very much enjoyed moments like this in the final play, where the real sounds and experiences I had could be brought in some way to an audience in an entirely different setting.

7.4 Chapter 4: PredJEWdice

The Rabbi commends the Dybbuk on the depiction of Jerusalem Syndrome and moves the action swiftly on with a sardonic, "NEXT!", as if the previous scene was an acting audition gone bad. A worn out Dybbuk gathers itself up, as the faint memory of the tune of a song comes to mind. It tries to pull the tune and the lyrics together and managing to do so, by the last lines of the verse they are in full flow of the song, *The Jewman*. A grotesque and rousing rendition of the song follows. The antisemitism of the lyrics is presented with gusto, complete with pastiche of a crooked and creeping Jewish peddler, and a genteel Irish housewife. The Dybbuk sets the table with a tablecloth, tea and buns, and right-ends a chair to take a seat as it transforms into Woman 3 in the kitchen of her home.

Woman 3 wears an elegant cashmere scarf and fusses about the tea and buns like a typical Irish Mammy. Her story is that of the casual antisemitism that she has encountered at various moments of her life. Woman 3 is polite in her criticism of others, but it is clear that these moments have impacted upon her deeply.

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like gown from hotel bed linen, and the preaching of sermons at holy sites around the city (Bar-El *et al* 2000).

Figure 15 (7.4): In the kitchen with Woman 3, *HSWR*

Nonetheless, despite the prejudices and hypocrisies she has encountered, she considers that being both Irish and Jewish is a "terrific blessing" because there is a certain something about both that she feels deeply connected to. Woman 3 fades and the Dybbuk recalls the last lines of *The Jewman*. The true nature of the lyrics becomes apparent and The Dybbuk allows the melody to fall away. It sits at the table, momentarily dismayed by what has become clear about the antisemitic inference of the song.

This scene was intended as a moment of humour after the frenetic energy of the time spent in Jerusalem. The figures in the song are summed up with grotesque gesture; the tableware and buns are passed up through a hole in the stage (the Dybbuk's entrance and also the holy well) by a disembodied hand; Woman 3 is jovial, and mocking of her bullies. The scene moves the audience from the outside landscapes of Jerusalem and the country road of Man 2, to the intimate setting of a homely kitchen. It is also intended as a reflection on the kinds of casual antisemitism I encountered when discussing my research topic with some strangers – an insidious kind of racism which is also reflected in the lyrics of the song. (I discuss this in the section Chapter 1.5: Discordance).

7.4.1 Vignette: Pigtown

The song reminds the Rabbi of an infamous incident of antisemitism in Limerick in 1904 (See Chapter 1.6), when a local priest spoke out vehemently against the local Jewish population of the city. The Rabbi explains that it wasn't so much a pogrom (as was widely reported), but more of a boycott of Jewish-run businesses in an effort to drive them out of the city. The Rabbi introduces the protagonist of the affair as Fr. John Creagh, and with

a violent gesture of their hand the Dybbuk destroys the homely kitchen of the previous scene. Donning the tablecloth as vestments, the table becomes a pulpit. The Dybbuk spits and screams the extracts of the violent verbatim text from Fr. Creagh's actual sermons during this incident in 1904, dispossessing the Dybbuk with the final damning statement,

> ***I do not hesitate to say that there are no greater enemies of the Catholic Church than the Jews.***

A change of lighting indicates that we are now in a barracks of some sort in roughly the same era, where a young woman is being interviewed by the local police sergeant. The Dybbuk plays Nora Keefe, wearing the tablecloth as a headscarf, and a brusque Rabbi plays Sergeant McEvoy. The incident in question refers to an altercation between a local Jewish peddler named Sandler, and an antisemitic parish priest, which Nora Keefe was the sole witness to. Nora's description of the incident is humorous, but peppered with an awareness of the injustice of the treatment of the peddler. Nora finds the priest's red-faced and blustering objection to the peddler, who was selling his wares to the people of the village, both amusing and confounding – she needs the goods that the peddler provides which are affordable to her. Her final lines, uttered as she and the headscarf disappears, affirm her indifference to the man's religious persuasion versus the practicalities of her situation:

> ***Well, Sargent McEvoy your honour sir, 'tis like this. I resent Fr. Gleeson's interference in making me give back my two new blankets to the Pedlar Sandler. Sure I'm only a poor herdsman's daughter – a good many of my class would be in a bad way for clothing and bed covering come the winter only for the Jews...a wicked bad way altogether...***

I wanted both sections of this scene to illustrate the contrast between violent speech and comic effect. Creagh's prejudice is raw and nakedly presented. His is vehement antisemitism, and the events are part of the fabric of the history of the city where *HSWR*

was performed. Though the boycott of Limerick is widely known and written about, little of the actual facts and testimony have ever been dramatised. In contrast with Creagh, though the testimony of Nora Keefe has been dramatised for comic effect, the scene works to highlight the casual antisemitism of the day as experienced by these new and feared immigrants, rich and poor alike. The dramatisation of her testimony is intended as a moment where the audience might ask themselves about contemporary acts of casual racism similar to those on display here. The text used in this scene was sourced in Dermot Keogh's seminal publication, *Jews in Twentieth-Century Ireland* (2002) where the actual events of the Limerick boycott and the incident with Nora Keefe are accounted for in detail.

This entire section was also reminiscent of the 'immediate and historical' structural tropes of playwright Anna Deavere-Smith whose work in the main is the act of relaying real events and people to audiences without the intervention of journalistic voices. By performing the history of Limerick's antisemitic past to a contemporary audience in the same location, I hoped that together we might begin to address the ways in which this past might continue to inform our present (Lyons C.R. and Lyons J.C. 1994, p.44).

Figure 16 (7.4.1): Nora Keefe, *HSWR*

7.5 Chapter Five: Alien Overlords

A change in tone completely with a burst of the song *This Must Be The Place* by Talking Heads. The Dybbuk dances, but in a more relaxed manner than before, happy to have

shed the intensity of Fr. Creagh's words. The hand in the hole offers a perfect pint of stout and, taking a sip, the Dybbuk becomes Man1.

He is young, witty and deep thinking, and has clearly pondered his Jewishness before. He jokingly refers to the light-hearted hypocrisy of his culturally Jewish father's penchant for ham and cheese sandwiches, a staple of the traditional Irish diet of his Catholic mother's background. He plays, sarcastically with the idea that there are secrets that Jews keep from non-Jews, like how at night they all dress up as Batman-like "Super Rabbis".

The Rabbi interrupts the performance of Man 1 to remind the Dybbuk of something – the aliens. At first the Dybbuk is confused, but with a change of lighting, some cheesy piano music and a clink of glasses, it is transported to a cosy wine bar to revisit a vague memory.

7.5.1 Vignette: Plurality

In the wine bar, the Dybbuk plays itself on a date and the Rabbi plays a male companion. At first it is delightful to be in this man's company, but the situation rapidly deteriorates. The date talks a lot – the Dybbuk is unable to interject his stream of vainglory – until he stumbles upon the subject of the Jews. At last! The Dybbuk feels this may finally turn into a dialogue as this is their area of expertise after all. But the date also happens to be an expert on alien conspiracy theories involving the Jews. He proceeds to lecture that due to a grammatical mistranslation of one of the Hebrew words for "God", the first peoples of Israel were in fact a tribe of aliens from outer space. The Dybbuk spits out its drink in amazement at this statement, and swiftly orders another to dull its dumbfoundedness. After further elucidation, the date concludes that their alien origins are the reason why Jews control mega-wealth and commerce in today's world – everything from banks, to media, to art and who knows, even food. The Dybbuk is astounded and bored and stumbles away from the scene, as Man 1 re-emerges.

This scene is based on a real-life instance that I experienced personally. I felt it was worthy of inclusion as just one example of the kinds of misinformation that often perpetuate about Jews and global economics. The conspiracy theory presented is so

outlandish that staging the scene presented much by way of comic effect. I performed a pastiche of the male companion, who was not Irish himself, so as to highlight the ridiculousness of the argument he put forward as credible theory.

7.5.2 Chapter Five: Alien Overlords (cont'd.)

Man 1 offers his opinion on the vignette just gone. Perhaps the date was just laying all his cards on the table from the beginning in his search for a partner who believes the very same things. And isn't that fair enough? Man 1 sees the humour in all of this, concluding that of course he himself is half alien – "like Superman." He offers the Dybbuk a drink, as his presence fades out.

These two sections were knitted together using participant testimony and an actual experience I had early on in my research. In recounting the experience of the date to Man 1 during our field interview he offered some hugely witty insights into the kinds of negative stereotypes that he faced as a child regarding his Jewish heritage. He also spoke eloquently about the conflicts and contradictions within his Irish and Jewish heritages and how he reconciles these for himself to the outside world. Man 1 is a hugely talented musician – he is a critically acclaimed electronic producer, and also plays in funk and *klezmer* bands. The music chosen for this section was the actual music that had underscored our conversation in the pub where this interview took place. The song, *This Must Be The Place* by Talking Heads, echoes the essences of *HSWR* and its core themes of disorientation, belonging, and of shared experiences. Listening back repeatedly to the interview the song became imprinted on my mind and indivisible from his verbatim text. Again, this was a moment where the sound of the place became the sound world of the actual play and the lyrics of the song were coincidentally of resonance to the themes at work:

Home, is where I want to be
But I guess I'm already there...
I guess that this must be the place
I can't tell one from the other
I find you, or you find me?

This is a section that required a more heavy-handed editorial approach in order to marry the incredulous experience I had on the date with the conspiracy theorist, with that of the witty and imaginative repartee that I experienced with Man 1.

7.6 Chapter Six: Musselmanner

In darkness, save for a tight spotlight, the Dybbuk begins to shred the paper front the Jerusalem scene. A clock ticks in the distance, constant and unrelenting. The Rabbi speaks extracts from the text *Moni* by Ka-Tzetnik 135633, a former inmate of Auschwitz who became a renowned writer on his experience, and who provided dramatic testimony at the trial of Adolf Eichmann in 1961. The Dybbuk speaks further extracts from Woman 1's interview about growing up with a knowledge of the Holocaust. When it speaks, it stops shredding the paper; when the Rabbi speaks, the Dybbuk begins to tear off tiny pieces again. It lets each piece fall and drift to the floor as if they might be prayer offerings to be wedged between the stones at the Western Wall. Or flakes of snow. Or ashes. Woman 1 talks about the living, her disbelief at those who obeyed the ideologies of destruction – the Rabbi speaks of naked skeletons. It is not a conversation, neither can hear the other and these are two individual monologues. But somehow thoughts are passed back and forth, almost spurring the other on. The Rabbi finishes his description of the skeletons with the line:

> ***You do not see them. Just as you do not see the paper, but the words written on it.***
>
> **The Dybbuk lets the last scrap of paper fall from her hand. There is complete darkness.**

This scene was written in an attempt to acknowledge the vast and complex history of the Holocaust, but without being consumed by the disturbing and graphic history of the period. With a background in Holocaust education I have had enormous access to this subject and how it has been re-presented many times on stage and screen with various levels of success. I will acknowledge that some of the choices made in developing this

scene may have been informed by the pursuit of "good taste", and perhaps even the approval of members of the community, but ultimately these feelings did not inhibit the overall creation of this scene. *HSWR* is not about the Holocaust, though this history is unavoidable in (or has not been avoided by), most representations of Jewish identity and experience. This section is intended to be reminiscent of the rethinking of Holocaust representations that occurred in the early postmodern by experimentalists such as Jerzy Grotowski. It also meant to reflect the idea that memory theory has a unique function in the construction of Jewish identity narratives as, post-war, theatre makers were forced to reflect on how these stories had formerly been told, the devastating circumstances of the loss of these stories, and their possible reclamation in the wake of the absence of millions of voices. Long-standing Jewish archetypes become what Rothberg claims is the implicit 'victim identity vis-à-vis the shadow of the past' (2000, p. 245). It was some time before more complex retellings of these trauma narratives were visible – the seminal 1985 documentary *Shoah* by French filmmaker Claude Lanzmann is widely credited as the breakthrough event in the reframing of Holocaust accounts and testimonies. Felman argues that the ways in which the Holocaust was laid bare in this nine-hour epic was an entirely radical revision of all previous Holocaust narratives up to that moment at the outer limits of storytelling (Kearney 2002, p. 66). The documentary calls into question the very fundamentals of the relationship between history, art, and witnessing the Other up to that point (Rothberg 2000, p.104)

Figure 17 (7.6) *Musselmanner*, *HSWR*

The second text used in this scene is an extract from the book *Moni* by Auschwitz survivor, Ka-Tzetnik 135633, who wrote all his works under this pen name which had been his prisoner name at the camp. *Moni* is a harrowing book about a young boy selected to serve as a *peipel* (sex slave) for SS chiefs in Auschwitz, an abuse which was commonplace during the camp's existence. In the postscript to the novel, Ka-Tzetnik 135633 makes a note which sums up the kind of representation I was trying to achieve in that moment:

> [T]he tragedy of these zeros is impossible to comprehend. So that the world should know and remember Auschwitz so that such statistics may never be repeated, I have told part of the story of the two million on the life and death of one small boy.
>
> (1963, p.287)

The text for Woman 1 that was used in this section reflects her experience as a child growing up in the shadow of the inherited trauma of the Holocaust. Much of *Moni* was too graphic to include line-for-line in this iteration of *HSWR* so it became key to strike a balance between the awfulness of the history revealed so poetically in the lines from Ka-Tzetnik 135633, and its lasting effects on a generations of Jews who experienced the Holocaust indirectly. The Holocaust is neither my history, nor my family's heritage, but I have a deep respect for those who have lived this history and the lessons they have taught me. The ethical approach for me was to handle the area sparsely, drawing on material that is based on eye-witness testimony, though a degree removed through literature in an effort to open the subject up for the audience whilst preventing them from drifting away from the wider subject at hand – that of Jewish identity in Ireland. Kearney echoes this sentiment by suggesting that the over-representation of the Holocaust ultimately leads to the transgression of its horrors (2002, p.51). These concerns are best articulated by Holocaust survivor and renowned author Elie Wiesel who claimed that some stories are untellable –

> After the war every survivor was asked the same question by the dead: Will you be able to tell our tale? Now we know the answer: no. Their tale cannot be told I sent and will never be. Those who spoke right not heard; the story you heard was not the story they told.
>
> (1974, p.404)

7.7 Chapter Seven: Casting Out

New off-stage voices, previously unheard, herald a change of tone. The voices offer their opinions on what it is to be Jewish, racism, the rise of right-wing ideologies, and a number of other politically fraught topics. It is as if overheard in a pub or at a dinner party, and the temperature of the debate becomes increasingly heated. Commentary on the conflict between Israel and Palestine intensifies over the course of the soundscape, until the topic dominates entirely. While the voices have been speaking, the Dybbuk is pushed and pulled by an invisible force from one opinion to another as they try to convince it that their individual perspective is in fact the correct one. The Dybbuk whimpers, “I don’t, I don’t know enough” – also a direct quote from the interview material – a sentiment echoed by one of the voices. The Dybbuk constructs a man shape and a woman shape from the clothing and objects scattered around the space on either side of the stage, representing the figures who might be speaking the thoughts it is hearing. Again, it is pulled back and forth between the two as the Rabbi quotes from Psalm 91 – the prayer text traditionally used in Jewish exorcisms. The tree bursts into flames as images of Jewish life are projected directly onto the scene. At the climax a woman’s voice is heard saying;

> ***If you want to achieve any kind of authenticity in your work, you need to move away from yet another superficial representation of the community.***

Simultaneously, the Dybbuk shields itself from the din with the tablecloth from the kitchen scene, and onto this is clearly projected a still from the first production in 1920 of Ansky’s text.

Figure 18 (7.7): Casting Out, *HSWR*

The image shows a tormented Leah, her face heavy with white grease paint and mid exorcism. As the Dybbuk drops the cloth, the audience sees that it has taken on Leah's same gesture from the projection, and that these dybbuks are now one and the same entity. The voices combined overlap and swell with the Rabbi screaming the exorcism rites above them all and, as with the bells in Jerusalem, the sounds build to an uncomfortable cacophony. The Dybbuk scurries off into the darkness – the voices, lights and images begin to fade.

The text for this scene comprised of three main elements – the off-stage voice text is drawn entirely from the participant interviews edited together to sound like multiple and disparate voices; the text of Psalm 91, as spoken by the Rabbi; images which I collected at various stages of the research process in places of Jewish interest. These images included pictures from the Oskar Schindler factory in Krakow, screengrabs of antisemitic commentary in newspapers and online, and images I had taken in the Cork synagogue in the weeks before its closure.

Figure 19 (7.7-2): Selection of the stills used as projections "Casting Out", *HSWR*

The final image (bottom right) is that of the actress Hana Rovina, who was the first actress to play Leah in the original 1920 (or 1922, depending on the source) production of *Der Dibuk* by Habima Theatre in Moscow. Rovina became famous in the world of Yiddish theatre for her portrayal of ill-fated Leah and having discovered the photo I wanted to include it as a tribute to the genealogy of the role.

7.9 Chapter Eight: Echoes

When the lights come up, a shaken Dybbuk has taken refuge up in the branches of the dead olive tree. In a calm half-light it sings a verse of *Arum Dem Fayer*, and on the last lines dons the knitted hat of Woman 4. She is a Liverpudlian with a dry sense of humour, particularly in relation to the condition of being Jewish. Hers is a complex relationship with the identity and she admits that she struggles to feel part of the Jewish community in Ireland, where she has lived for almost thirty years.

Figure 20 (7.9): Woman 4, *HSWR*

And yet, for her there can be no other home than Ireland now and she ponders her position of in betweenness with:

> ***So maybe that's what I'm learning - I'm not only this. I'm something else and I want to know who I am.***

At last there is an exhalation from the Dybbuk – this sentiment from Woman 4 encompasses her own feelings of liminality. The Rabbi recites from the story, *The Heart and The Spring* by Rabbi Nachman (Nanach 2016, p.261). He says:

> ***And there is a Mountain, and on the Mountain stands a Stone, and from the Stone emerges a Spring. Now, everything has a heart, and the entire world also has a heart, and the Heart of the World is a complete structure, with face, hands, feet, etc.***

The Dybbuk begins to collect the belongings of all those who have inhabited it and hangs them from the branches of the tree in a ritualistic fashion. When this is finished, the garments and items hang as if the arms of a Chanukah menorah. The Rabbi's story fades.

The Dybbuk fades. A beat. The Researcher appears in place of the Dybbuk – though clearly another aspect of the same person, she is altogether calm and speaks the following as she sheds the Dybbuk's clothing:

> ***Now I will tell you about culture. Culture is [a] garden. It is not a thing of nations [...] It is children playing. Culture is the simple grass through which the wind blows sweetly, and each grass blade bends softly to the caress of the wind. It is like a mother who would pick up her child and kiss it, with the tenderness that gave birth to it. We don't see this anymore [...] we see nations. They are not natural[...] Their roots are too harsh. They grow up too fast.***

She stands before the audience in trousers and a top as herself. An intense ray of sunlight shines on her, as uplifting music plays. The Researcher asks the audience:

> ***Do you want to move to the sun and get the last bit of it?***
> (Pause)
> ***Let's do it.***
>
> **She disappears into the crowd. The music fades out.**
> **Blackout.**

This scene uses a number of types of text to draw the piece to a conclusion, in the form of a question. *The Heart and The Spring* religious text dates back to the early Hasidic movement of the 1700s and was shared with me by one of the participants. Coincidentally, a version of the parable is used in Ansky's play, but I didn't notice this until after I had finished the text of *HSWR.* The much longer original version reveals

beautifully the idea of the yearning of the heart (each one of us) to return to the spring (the source). This was the perfect metaphor for the journey I had undertaken, and the idea that all stories and those who tell them might indeed be connected by some essential source. What I love about the piece is that whilst it is a Jewish text, its depiction of nature surpasses specific doctrine and echoes the pantheism suggested at earlier points in the play. The decision to reveal a Researcher character at the end of the play was debated dramaturgically for some time. It is not important that the audiences know the character is named "Researcher" in the text. Her inclusion was a nod to Barbara Myerhoff, whose thoughts on the notion of culture are some of the last lines spoken. The Researcher's last lines are again verbatim material – and though they refer to nothing of particular relevance to the play, they are intended as an invitation to the audience to continue the journey themselves with new knowledge. This moment was an opportunity for me to speak directly to the audience and say, "this is me; these are the people who I brought to meet you; now tell us who you are?"

Chapter 8 : Curating a Gallery of Ghosts

The term 'bricolage' refers to practical work where the craftsperson uses any materials, tools and methodologies to hand in the construction of new articles of meaning. It is a process that, according to Aktkinson, requires ingenuity and improvisation but one which can also be a way of invoking everyday meaning and metaphor 'to make the dramatic plausible and coherent' (2010, p.7). Having explored the dramaturgical and multi-textural choices employed in the writing of the *HSWR* text in Chapter 7, this chapter serves as a breakdown of other material and symbolic totems that added further layers to the piece. In particular this chapter addresses how the olive tree became, amongst other things, a conceptualisation of my private politics as well as of the set design, given its potent symbolism in Israeli life and culture. I explain the differing processes of how the musical and vocal sound worlds were developed with electronic producers *SubRelic* and with sound artistic Bernard Clarke. Lastly, I look at how the rehearsal process was undertaken as a self-directed solo performer, and some of the challenges faced therein. In reflecting on her own bricolage practice research process, Yardley proposes that there are 'multiple ways in which human cognitive networks process information and make creative leaps' (2008, para.1). This, she attests, is the single-most convincing argument in favour of processes of multi-layered narrative enquiry such as those evident in my own research activities (Ibid.). The layers that make up this practice research are deep and rich; the voices, stories, music and images used in the final play all reflect the path of this research peregrination in some way, and were all chosen deliberately to enhance the meaning and representation of each other, reflexively.

8.1 Practice Tree-search

> ***Design notes from Field Diary: 10/12/18***
> ***Imagine the crown of a tree against the blue and cloudless firmament of a desert landscape. This tree is abundant and healthy despite its wilderness home, the thicker branches***

supporting haphazard pollards of endless tertiary extensions that eventually give life to the tiniest of green shoots.
To all intents and purposes this a fine specimen. But this tree has no trunk. Detached from any roots, the tree floats adrift in arboreal dormancy, of no meaningful consequence to the landscape around it.

Without a trunk to make sense of it, this tree can't give to or receive nourishment from its environs...

Dendritic symbolism has accompanied this research since its inception in both the figurative and literal sense. For my second-year progression panel, looking for a symbol to frame the research to date, I used the conceptual structure of the olive tree to assemble the research as an ecosystem of burgeoning ideas. From here, the idea of a tree as the central focus for the set design of *Here Shall We Rest* took root. An ancient symbol of regeneration, trees are closely linked to the core religious semiotics of Judaism and have often been applied as mythic symbolism in theatre. The enchanted or foreboding forests of Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, *Macbeth*, and *Much Ado About Nothing*; the lone tree post in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, and the grove that symbolises an entire family history in Chekov's *The Cherry Orchard*. In the realm of Judeo-Christianity, sixteen varieties of trees are mentioned throughout the Old Testament. One of these is, of course, the infamous Tree of Knowledge, which bore the forbidden fruit of good and evil, heralding the downfall of Adam and Eve. Trees also feature frequently in Jewish prayer. The traditional blessing performed by religious Jews on seeing the first budding fruit trees of Spring gives thanks to God for the "goodly trees" which give mankind such pleasure (Shitah Mekubetzes, *Berachos* 43b). Such is the importance of trees to Judaism that rabbinical law decrees that if the Messiah were to arrive whilst you are planting a tree, you should continue until the tree has been planted before going to greet him.

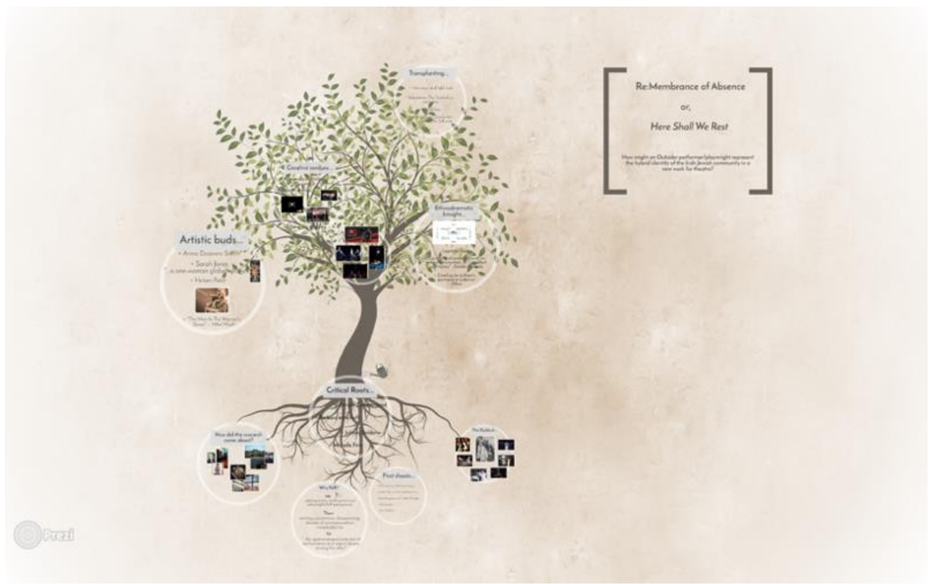

Figure 21 (8.1): Screengrab of 2nd Year Progression Panel presentation (Prezi.com)

Once a symbol of peace and reconciliation, olive trees are now a deeply revered statement of rootedness in the articulation of identity in the Middle East (Abufarha 2008, p.346). The olive tree became a symbol of Palestinian resistance in the 1980s owing to its long-standing place in the cultural landscape of the people of the region as a critical economic commodity. Olives and olive oil are central to the Palestinian diet and the maintenance of the trees and the crop is a social activity as much as a necessity of good farming. But the olives farms of the West Bank are now a bitter acquisition in the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict. For many Palestinian farmers these trees provide a vital source of income and food, but they are frequently burned, bulldozed and felled in land grabs and reprisal attacks by right-wing Zionists and the Israeli Defence Forces in occupied territories. Critically acclaimed documentaries like *Budrus* (2010) and *5 Broken Cameras* (2012) have brought attention to the plight of farmers engaged in the non-violent defence of their small farmlands, and the tit-for-tat (now *quid pro quo*) actions waged by the defence forces against them. The image of these maimed trees, absorbing and reflecting the violent conflict all around them, weighed heavily on my mind's eye in conceptualising the design of *HSWR*. Reminded of a walk I took through the Garden of Gethsemane in Jerusalem in 2015, the gnarled beauty of these trees in their oasis-like setting, and the terrible reality of what their form has come to represent dominated my memories. An olive tree viewed from one angle is lush and fruitful, whilst from another angle it can look grey and decaying. The trees of that place were so strikingly beautiful to me that I took some of the leaves home. Once a year they are brought out to adorn, with pride of place, my hodgepodge Christmas crib featuring a menagerie of *tchotchke* ornaments and figures.

Hardly Biblically accurate, save for those olive leaves. The contrasting living-dead beauty of the olive tree and this shared characteristic with the Dybbuk's liminal status came to encapsulate the central thematic concepts that I hoped the play would relay.

Figure 22 (8.1-2): Olive grove in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jerusalem (Photo: Wylde 2015)

The political significance of the olive tree also forced me to think about my own politics and how these should or should not be addressed throughout the research. I spoke to a number of people on this journey who assumed that because of the subject matter I must be a supporter of the nation of Israel, and therefore the resettlement of Palestine. Many of these people told me blatantly of their assumptions; others were too polite to, but their position was obvious from the way they interrogated my methods and motivations with suspicion. This fact often made for uncomfortable encounters, occasionally attacking and upsetting. For this reason it became important for me, the artist and the person, to acknowledge my own views in some subtle way through the conceptual design of *HSWR*, without making it the sole focus or compromising my research ethics in any way. I think my personal positionality might be useful to include in this formal discussion however, so as to bring all aspects of this complex identity matrix to light. Despite a deep resonance with Jewish culture I, like many others, am against the violent seizure of Palestinian lands by the Israeli state. I am against non-peaceful means to achieve either a Palestinian state, or in the defence of the occupied territories by the Israel Defence forces. I am against the punitive legal system which props up aggressive Zionist objectives, but I also recognise that for some Israelis, though ideologically opposed to the idea of a separation wall, live the benefits of decreased terrorist activity since the blockade of the West Bank and Gaza.

I see the futility of the cat and mouse games played by one side against another, the vast inequalities of power and privilege between the two sides, and the humanitarian crisis that exists in refugee camps within the state. I have experienced the harsh words of friends and strangers for bringing alternative perspectives to these arguments, and disapproval for having visited Israel on an educational exchange from those who have worked in activism in Palestine. Simply put, and to quote *HSWR*, “I don’t know enough”.

I left Israel overwhelmed by the complexity and entrenchedness of the opposing viewpoints in a deadlock that is vastly different from the Northern Ireland Peace Process, but often mistakenly conflated as a similar struggle. The symbol of the olive tree was my way of at least signifying the impact of these enormous issues on my research process; a way to acknowledge something of my ethics amongst the myriad of other voices and opinions that appear. The Polish forest of trees at the centre of the legend told by the Rabbi to the Dybbuk at the beginning of the play and which accounts for the arrival of the first Jews in Europe was instead substituted visually with my olive tree (See Appendix C: Prologue:(Re)Birth). This tree was married with the image of a Jesse Tree towards the end of the play when the Dybbuk hangs all the articles belonging to the participants from its branches. First popularized by Middle Ages Christians, a Jesse Tree is traditionally adorned at Christmas time with Biblical figures and stories from the lineage of Christ reaching all the way back to King David and his father, Jesse. I drew on this ritual of hanging markers of inheritance on the tree at the end of the play as a way to condense all the motifs that had inspired the overall design of the piece with the tree at its heart.

Though the olive tree became the visual anchor for the thematic and symbolic layers of the play, the intra-action of constructing the tree reflected the theoretical layering of this practice research in a material way (Barad, 2007). In total it took about five days to make the olive tree set piece and each step of the tree-making process mirrored the material and textural layering of this practice research.

Figure 23 (8.1-3): Making the olive tree, December 2018.

I had approached puppeteer and designer Dr Emma Fisher early on in the development process with a design idea that included a tree at the centre. Initially I thought that I would purchase a living tree that could have a life after the production, but the expense and logistical difficulties involved ruled this out as a possibility. Instead we arrived at an idea inspired by the leaves of the olive tree itself, which are green on one side and ashen grey on the other. The world of this play would reflect this palette to appear as a place neither alive nor dead. Rather than using various organic materials this look was then developed artificially to provide the best continuity of design. In her puppetry work Emma uses a wire frame and papier-mâché method to construct most of her marionettes, and this same simple process was scaled up to make the tree. Using the simple "tools to hand" (wire, paper, glue, paint), we constructed a rudimentary frame which was stuffed with newspapers to create a trunk and talon-like branches, akin to the ancient olive trees of the Middle East. Onto this frame we moulded papier-mâché details of the texture of a real olive tree, bringing character and detail to this otherwise crude structure (Fig.24: 1&2). At least three layers of paper were applied to the frame in a slow and highly tactile process, and as each layer was applied, I began to see that this process mirrored the ways in which the theoretical and conceptual ideas were beginning to layer themselves on top of each other in practice. Each fragment of paper applied to the frame symbolised a participant, their words, a place that I had been, a philosophical notion, a song that I had heard along this research journey; each daub of paint symbolised the possibilities in bringing all these inferences and influences together. An act of immersed bricolage such as this tree-making process, and the way in which new thoughts were revealed to me through this intra-action is truly 'an act of translation and transmutation, whereby the 'base' materials are transformed into stage appearances. It is a form of alchemy'

(Atkinson 2010, p.9). Lastly, the very delicate olive leaves were made using a laser cutting printer at FabLab in Limerick – a digital fabrication laboratory that specialises in bringing these technologies to creatives and their processes across all disciplines. Cutting the leaves using digital technology meant that accuracy of execution actually resulted in an extremely life-like rendering. When it was finished, the tree was attached to a specially constructed ladder hidden in the back of the tree so that it would appear I had climbed up into its branches at the climax of the play.

Figure 24 (8.1-4): Tree process 1- 4

With the tree dominating the mise-en-scène the rest of the visual landscape comprised of simple items in-keeping with a Poor Theatre aesthetic. Cutlery protruded from the ground in recognition of a traditional method of koshering utensils used in some religious households. Stones and rocks delineated a deserted place, reminiscent of the landscape of the Burren in the West of Ireland. A chair and table were painted to blend in with the ashen scenery. Shadow puppets (designed and hand-cut by Emma Fisher) were used to tell the "Stone of Destiny" segment with the story involving multiple characters and locations. The use of shadow puppets in this way was also a personal nod to performance work I have done in theatre for young audiences, and to break up the one-woman direct address narration of much of the piece. Every item used on stage (and indeed, much of the sound design) was considered carefully for its self-referentiality or how it circled back

to aspects of other stories within, the larger symbolism at work, or the sentiments of the creation process of the play. Additional props like pints of stout, cakes and cups of tea were passed up from the hole in the set floor by a disembodied hand, a detail which seemed utterly possible in a landscape of alternative realities.

My costume was designed and made by Deirdre Dwyer, who also served as dramaturg on the piece. Deirdre and I are regular collaborators through our work in BrokenCrow Theatre, and Deirdre was Theatre Artist in Residence at MIC at the time of production. The costume was based on images of past dybbuk productions which differ greatly in style and concept but are frequently reminiscent of some kind of wedding dress, shroud, or nightdress, no matter what era or interpretation the production. There were two important factors to my costume – first that it too would have a similar inference of those garments, but that it would serve primarily as a literal blank canvas onto which the various characters could appear through the addition of a small accessory such as a necklace or backpack. Secondly, I wanted the costume to have some element of transformation at the end of the play that would facilitate the Dybbuk's symbolic change into the "Researcher" character. This moment was intended as a way of saying to the audience that the imagined had concluded, and that the real doing could now begin together. Though a complete costume change was the desired effect, this moment was ultimately only achievable through minimal changes to my dybbuk costume; the shedding of the large and cumbersome skirt, the undoing of restrictive collar buttons and the rolling up of sleeves. Nonetheless, this moment symbolised a relaxation, as such, of fantasy in favour of a real and substantive meeting with the audience. Hair and make-up were intended to be unkempt and deathly, reminiscent of the early black and white film iterations of Ansky's play.

8.2 Sound from a ghost space

I worked with music producers Denis Clifford and Duncan Lutz of the electronic act *SubRelic* to achieve the sound world of *HSWR* (See Appendix F: Music to accompany this thesis). Both musicians hail from vastly different music worlds – Clifford, for example, is a self-taught traditional musician and grandson of famous Sliabh Luachra fiddler Julia Clifford. He won the Reich Remix Competition in 2011 for his remix of *Drumming* by Steve Reich, chosen by the composer himself, and has had a number of

solo albums released by indie labels in Ireland and America. I worked predominantly on the research and development of the music with Clifford, and from the beginning we identified a number of storytelling objectives that the soundscape should try to achieve. These included:

- creating a sense of location for a not-dead/not-living landscape;
- creating a score that went against the grain the audience's expectations regarding Jewish or Irish sounds;
- a theme (or themes) for the journey of the Dybbuk through the various stories.

During our creative brainstorming sessions, we discussed ideas like rebirth, the supernatural body, the abstract sound of shape-shifting, the aural connection to the earth. We discussed moments of importance throughout the arc of the piece like the first entrance of the Dybbuk who appears to breach the seal of the underworld arriving into another liminal landscape. We also discussed how we might somehow create an abstract sound to reference the Holocaust, and also the aural chaos of the Dybbuk's exorcism. Finally, we looked at what that last release of everything at the end play might sound like. *SubRelic* also used samples from a number of found sources that I had collected along the way, distorting these and blending them with their original electronic compositions. These samples included a recording of bells that I had made in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem; sounds from the natural world; samples of sacred, folk and *klezmer* music from a recording I had made with musicians Ruti Lachs and Avia Gurman in 2018 (See Fig. 25 below). Both Lach and Gurman are Jewish, neither Irish, and their knowledge of the music from various traditions proved an invaluable basis for *SubRelic* to work with. We played with the idea of aurally recreating the actual locations where the interviews had taken place as they had all occurred in very different settings with very different organic soundtracks. In the end it was decided that the focus should remain on the musical transitions between moments of action in the piece, and so this element of the sound design was never fully realised. We also looked at using texts from famous speeches relating to Jewish identity, but this idea was abandoned for the same reasons at a certain point. *SubRelic* mixed all these samples and layered them with multi-instrumental recordings of their own original music using the Ableton Live software. The overall blend of sounds from natural, electronic and musical genres brought a unique and

anti-stereotypical feel to the soundscape, which had been created in a truly bricolage and collaborative manner by synthesising all sounds and music that came to hand.

Figure 25 (8.2): Ruti Lachs (L) and Avia Gurman recording in MIC Media Department in 2018.

8.3 Is there a rabbi in the house?

The Rabbi is the cornerstone narrator of *HSWR* acting as a prompt for each new character that emerges in the piece and driving the action forward on behalf of the audience. The Rabbi also guides the Dybbuk through the incomprehensible world they have come to rest in. He is a symbolic composite character of all the "guide" voices that have influenced my research and practice processes – this is alluded to in the text through the information and choices he drip-feeds to the Dybbuk. During this first appearance he announces;

> ***... I am every symbol and every signifier; every light at the end of every tunnel. I am God and Gandhi;***

Yoga and Yoda...I'm even that guy at the music festival who made the really good falafel.
You're welcome!

The unseen Rabbi is a play on the familiar "voice of God" theatrical motif where a character or the audience is guided through a difficult personal chapter by some unseen force, although more commonly the voice of God in theatre is actually that of the disembodied voice making the safety announcements before a performance!

For a long time I debated whether to use a live actor offstage, or pre-record the actor and perform my text live against their track. Most of those consulted opted in favour of a live performance, but there were a number of reasons why I was reluctant to commit to opening the performance up in this way. Firstly, the budget did not extend to a reasonable artist's fee to cover sufficient rehearsal time and performance. Secondly, I was committed to the idea of this as an almost-exclusively solo piece. I was simply unwilling to expose my PhD research to the potential liability of too many cooks, as had been my experience in the past. At the same time, I didn't want to expose any trusted friends or respected colleagues to my own stresses at such a pivotal point in the process. In experimental terms it was very important to me that this should be a solo effort, albeit with significant help and strategic advice along the way. Lastly, I felt that rather than detract from the performance, the odd detachment of a pre-recorded voice might actually bring more of the sense of disorientation that I was hoping to achieve throughout the overall piece. Once this was established, I decided that for balance a male voice should be cast as the Rabbi. There was a first attempt at recording the Rabbi's full text, but this had to be abandoned in the end because of poor audio quality. The part was recast at a later date, this time played by the sound designer and radio artist, Bernard Clarke. Bernard is a multi-award-winning broadcaster for both his work with RTÉ lyric fm and as an independent sound artist and documentary maker.[52] I was incredibly fortunate that Bernard stepped in at the eleventh hour to offer his help; my own audio editing skills simply did not extend to the complex demands of the interplay between Rabbi and Dybbuk that were emerging. Bernard's technical and creative knowledge is staggering, and he was able to see possibilities in the interpretation of the character that even I hadn't envisaged. Bernard

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[52] Bernard's sound art is available at: https://soundcloud.com/bernard-clarke

mostly self-directed his own performance and editing choices; we collaborated once he had remixed a section of dialogue on where the emphasis needed to be input or the overall objectives of each exchange and what each needed to illustrate to the audience. A chorus of voices was recorded by the members of BrokenCrow Theatre, who performed as the cacophony of opinion in the “Casting Out” scene. This complex audio segment was edited by award-winning radio producer Eoin Brady into a climactic and chaotic soundscape for the climax of the play.

Working with pre-recorded audio was really only difficult during the rehearsal process without crew on hand to line up cues seamlessly so as not to disrupt the flow of dialogue. True, there is a lack of “liveness” and spontaneity in this way of working that is different from the changing nature of dialogue from performance to performance. Timing is key, from both performer and stage manager, in executing the flow of the text. It’s nerve-wracking to ponder what you might do for the rest of the play if the cues don’t come in on time in a play which was so dependent on the technology to cooperate. I would absolutely use this technique again where useful or necessary, but on reflection I would spend much more time creating and honing the off-stage voice device.. Though not undertaken last-minute by any means, because the original recording of the character had to be abandoned, this second iteration of the Rabbi had a much shorter development and production schedule. By the time this version was undertaken, I was well into the rehearsal process and working with scratch recordings of me saying the lines, and so I couldn’t give as much time to the collaboration as I would have liked.

8.4 Rehearsal process

Following a development period in late 2018, during which I worked on refining the text in consultation with dramaturg and designer Deirdre Dwyer, I rehearsed for three weeks (part-time) leading up to the performance in February 2020. Whilst I found the process of working in isolation immensely liberating, there were many times when I was lonely and missed the atmosphere of a community of creatives working together towards a shared end. Somewhat ironically, most of my rehearsals took place in the Meditation Room at MIC. The room is a former nun’s chapel adjoining the campus church, just off a busy internal thoroughfare. It is exceptionally quiet and a little dark, and remains heavily reminiscent of its Roman Catholic origins, though is now deemed to be a more multi-

denominational space for reflection and quiet time. The unlikeliness of this room, dominated by the trappings of a very specific dogma, came to encapsulate the idea of the liminal space between cultural identities through its overt display of one history making way for other traditions and rituals. So indeed, I treated the space ritualistically before each rehearsal – in the clearing of the furniture; my yoga practice and warm-up; the laying out of each symbolic totem for each character. Though I felt vulnerable in the practice, and in the thought of bringing this work into the public realm, this odd little space afforded me a feeling of protectedness so as to be free to try new things. I worked a traditional rehearsal room whereby there was warm-up time (usually yoga and vocal exercises), and an emphasis on particular scenes and sections for that day, and devising the transitions in and out of each. I also video recorded most of the sessions, especially the more physical or experimental sections, in lieu of a director and in order to ensure that the intended meaning would be clear for an audience, and also as a way of observing my own "bad habits" that would need to be cleaned up on the basis of what I had learned from Grotowskian principles of performance (See Reflection II for more on this).

There were a number of different approaches to the various kinds of material at work in the final script. In some cases, I listened back to the interview segments each monologue was derived from to hear the nuance and musicality of each person's speech. I worked on a facial expression or posture for each monologue, calling to mind each participant's actual gestures based on my memory of our encounter and drawing inspiration for detail from Levinas's thoughts on the face of the stranger. I played with puppetry and storytelling techniques I have used in performing for young audiences. I also played with physicalities of prayer from both Jewish and Christian traditions with which I was personally familiar or had witnessed in field observations. In the end neither of these physicalities were used explicitly in the piece but they were sometimes alluded to. In the *Musselmanner* section, for example, which addresses Holocaust history, the dialogue was performed gently rocking back and forth to emulate the practice of *shuckling*, which I had witnessed at the Western Wall in Jerusalem and in Jewish prayer services elsewhere. At the same time the Dybbuk tears up small strips of paper in an act reminiscent of the fragments of prayers left as offerings in the Western Wall, but also of the ashes of the concentration camps.[53] At another point, the Dybbuk picks up a chair and dances around

[53] *Shuckling* is a Yiddish word that means to rock, shake, or swing, and is an ancient practice believed to emphasise the devotion to prayer.

the space, holding it aloft. This image was reminiscent of the celebratory dance performed at orthodox Jewish weddings where the bride and groom are carried around by the revellers. To avoid imitation (or appropriation) these movements were incorporated only partially, or in very subtle ways – in no way was I trying to recreate either, it was more to use the bodily impetus of these acts. I applied this paired-back approach whenever I wanted to reflect something culturally specific to Judaism, remaining conscious of the fact that these are not my traditions. Of singing amongst the diaspora Phelan states that, '[t]he migrating human body is capable of transferring and brokering a great deal of cultural information through the sounds it embodies' (2018, p.181). Though mine is not a migrating body strictly speaking, my goal was that cultural information would still be transferred in the migration of person to person (the voice of the participants performed through me), and from story to story.

8.5 'I am, as researcher, a bricoleur, a maker of patchwork, a weaver of stories, an assembler of montage...' (Yardley 2008, para.12)

The title of this chapter infers a curation process in the layering of all the material used in *HSWR*. This curation process can also be thought of more specifically as similar, or the same, as that of the bricoleur. Denzin and Lincoln suggest that there are many kinds of bricoleur researchers – interpretive, narrative theoretical, political (2011, p.4). My own practice research has intersected with all of these modes at one time or another, but it is perhaps the role of interpretive bricoleur that best fits the evolving methodology of this practice research. An interpretive bricoleur produces a 'pieced-together set of representations that are fitted to the specifics of a complex situation' (Ibid.) – in this case, the hugely complex and unchallenged field of Jewish identity in Ireland, and its representation on the Irish stage. This way of working provides both a comfortable and comforting space for me, as researcher / artist. For me, the overall term 'bricolage' signifies something altogether more fundamental than theoretical – the process is that of the gut in action. The instinct of the artist in the placing of certain materials alongside others knowing that somehow these differing or opposing materials will find a way to speak to each other. This way of working and researching opens up 'traditional' academia to all the senses, and to reinterpretation of meaning across multiple disciplines. The trap with this kind of gut-inspired practice research is to avoid decisions that result in 'naïvely

humanistic' or 'romantically impulsive' outcomes, as was often my concern being so closely related to the subjects in question (Yardley 2008, para.12). The other possible shortcoming with this kind of work is that it can become so layered, dense and self-referential that it is ultimately inaccessible for its audience. Again, this was a concern for this practice research, but was mostly avoided thanks to the dramaturgical input of other practitioners and academics. The greatest demand in working this way is allowing adequate time; time to allow for the 'emergent construction' to reveal amongst the rubble those elements most useful to the overall research aims and storytelling objectives (Weinstein and Weinstein 1991, p.6).

Reflections from a Fever Dream III: Staging Culture

2:09 am

I am in the front row of an enormous auditorium.

"Ladies and Gentiles, Goys and Girls, welcome to this year's Chhhhhhhhannukah Spectacular! With special guest host, Oskar Schindler!"

Through the mist of dry ice a ginger-haired Setanta appears, two perfect payot dangling from either temple. He folk-dances a game of hurling with a bottle balanced precariously on his head. "Oooo's" and "Aaaaaah's" from the audience when the bottle is sure to topple as he lunges for a puc but doesn't.

Then a chorus line of Irish dancers sidle onto the stage in perfect unison, legs flailing wildly, arms rigid and bolt. They are wearing costumes, not very traditional. Wait not boxes…dredls? Irish-dancing human dredls spinning and reeling to "If It Wasn't For The Irish And The Jews". The audience can't get enough.

The big finale is a medley. A swinging sign reads "Ballytefka". Villagers spill out from shops and houses of a plywood street front as the male chorus bursts in with:

> "*Who, day and night, must drive a John Dere tractor,*
> *Coach the local "Gah" team, guzzle down the pints?*
> *And who has the right, as master of the house,*
> *To flatulate in his own home?*
> *De Faaaah-der, de Fadder. Tra-di-shun!"*

Then the wives, sons and daughters all take a turn of their own and making the sign of the cross as they belt out the finale against

each other. I can't watch anymore and am propelled out of my seat. "NO!", I shout over the din of the orchestra, but they don't stop playing. Nothing for it but to clamber into the pit and then up onto the stage. Gasps again from the audience as everything comes to a stop. The lights dip but I am strapped in a spot, centre stage. Not so plucky now with all eyes my direction. The tune buzzes in my head; I begin to squeak out my interpretation of the lyrics -

"It's oooh-kaaay. It's ok. WE'RE DIFF-RENT!"

Oskar Schindler rolls his eyes at me.
The dream fades into the black and is gone as I restlessly turn over…

Towards a Third Voice Theatre

Throughout this thesis I refer to a wide range of disciplines and schools in navigating the storyteller's as an outside perspective. Michelle Fine's entanglement and hyphen space theory coupled with Levinas's obligation to the face of the stranger are the germination of a working methodology for a journey such as mine has been. It would be my hope that with some further maturity this methodology might also satisfy the performer's instinct that a particular story needs to be told, and also the question, "should I be the one to tell it?"

Johnny Saldaña, pioneer of ethnodrama in the early noughties, defined his practice thus:

> Ethno*theatre* employs the traditional craft and artistic techniques of theatre production to mount for an audience a live performance of research participant's experience and/or the researcher's interpretation of the data.
>
> (Saldaña 2005 p.1)

Ethnodrama uses a body of research undertaken that is then performed and has been employed in such diverse fields as social science to law, performed by artists and academics alike. My practice and reflection is of course, a work of ethnodrama according to the truest sense of Saldaña's qualification of the field. But there is something about the term *ethnodrama* that sticks in my creative craw. Ethnodrama seems so neat and tidy and conclusive a term, but such neatness has infrequently been my experience of the lives encountered and presented. For me this term somehow dismisses the possibility of the alchemical and metaphysical exchange that needs to occur when any leap of imaginative empathy is attempted. At the same time the terms "multiculturalism" or "multiculturalist theatre" present ambiguity and contradiction. Phelan notes that, in relation to the performance of music in diaspora, '(o)n the one hand multiculturalism is often acclaimed for its inclusiveness, but simultaneously is criticised for "diluting" indigenous traditions' (Phelan 2017, p.73). I wish to propose instead a new term for work that encompasses more beyond the staging of data, or the reductive problematics of such older terms as "multicultural". Instinctively I look to Saldaña for inspiration for this new term. Saldaña frequently draws from Dwight Conquergood's proposal of a radical approach to participant-observation as a process of 'co-performative witnessing', wherein the exchange becomes an ethnography of the ears and heart (2002, p.149). Revisiting

Conquergood's definition brings me one step closer to the kind of terminology I want to employ to my own process.

Tim Ingold describes his own work at the interface of art, anthropology, architecture and design as 'the pursuit of truth […] The unison of imagination and experience in a world to which we are alive, and which is alive to us' (2018, 00:42:20). He explains that the word "data" comes from the Latin word for "gift", and that acts of giving and receiving in normal daily life are central to the ways in which social relationships are formed and evolve. However, he argues that traditional methods of scientific data collection and analysis have done away with the natural gifting and receiving interdependency of social processes by formalising otherwise normal exchanges, and erasing the untidy aspects of social interaction. Researchers continue to extract or mine information *from* the subject, and at the same time are expected to cut themselves off emotionally from the subject in order to yield the most useful data. The researcher is therefore collecting data *on* the subject in order to find out what it says *about* them, therefore undoing the possibility of learning anything *from* them. Ingold finds the inequality of these relationships both unethical and inaccurate – the kind of re-colonisation that can be seen in the worst examples of cultural appropriation. Instead he suggests a return to the root meaning of the word (gift) where researchers receive what is given, and are also obliged to return something in exchange in a process of mutual-responsiveness (2018, 00:12:30). Rather than the clinical specificity of terms like data collection and ethnodrama, he proposes a process of correspondence — a giving back in respectful acknowledgement of what has been taken. Ingold also tackles the issue of context, particularly in relation to Humanities research. He claims that subjects like ethnography still require academic legitimisation. This is traditionally achieved through presentation of the social, cultural and historical contexts at play — a tidying up, if you will, of any messiness so that it fits into an acceptable bracket or body of research (00:17:19). But this tidying up is at odds with the very nature of human studies because identity *is* messy, subjective, and predominantly concerned with the experiential as opposed to the wholly quantifiable. By adopting Ingold's proposed reciprocity through correspondence, researchers in this and related fields might come to more rounded and holistic methods of critical engagement and reflection on these untidy-able and intangible experiences. Shouldn't good art always strive to pursue the enactment of experience, no matter how complete the outcome?

I found this idea of gifting and receiving, and Ingold's imagery of a world "alive" to researchers an immensely helpful, nay beautiful, way to think about the kinds of methodological processes and intra-actions undertaken throughout this research (Barad 2007, p.383). Mine are tentative first steps into a domain new to me in an experiment not without its flaws. From the outset I was aware that the lines of objectivity regarding this project were somewhat blurred. I held pre-existing relationships with some of the participants beforehand, and had insight and experience into the subject area through previous study and play-making. Instead of denying this fact by trying to step outside of my interest and connections to the subject, I came to rely upon trusted data "gifts" given to me by friends and acquaintances to form the foundation of the practice work. Achieving the kinds of accuracy of characteristics, the authenticity of imitation achieved by the likes of Anna Deavere-Smith and perfected over decades of training and practice did not ring true with the performer I know myself to be, and so imposing those techniques would probably have resulted in a less authentic portrayal of the participants. My method was to openly acknowledge myself as a vector for their stories, in a portrait that spoke to who they were essentially in the moment we met, and who we all are in the spaces between cultures of identity. The gift of their data to me, the subsequent creation of the play, and the performance of their stories was our reflexive act of gifting and receiving; a true correspondence.

It is perhaps coincidental, but this practice research is bookended by two hugely symbolic moments regarding the human relationship to the notion of the stranger, and the fear of the unknowable that strangers often represent. The first, in 2015, saw the single greatest mass movement of refugees since World War II from war-torn Syria, sweep across Europe. The second in 2020 during the Covid-19 global lockdown; a time when we were literally shut away and forced to become strangers to each other in unforeseen ways. Whilst the Syrian refugee crisis explicitly symbolises the fear of the stranger, their culture and what we might "do with them", the second moment symbolises fear now located in the familiar (i.e. the danger that even our closest loved ones represent to us in the unseen transmission of a deadly virus). What effect will these two moments have on our natural instincts of trust and distrust? What might we have learned about ourselves having been witnessed by only ourselves for weeks on end? Who will be allowed to tell whose story, since many of the voices of these moments have been lost? Will creative boundaries between freedom of speech, auteurship, and responsibility have to be redefined as a consequence of the isolation we experienced and new strangers that we created during

that time? What does this mean then for a theatre charged with relaying the changing face of culture in Ireland to Irish audiences?

McIvor and Spangler, and Lentin all confer in the belief that Ireland's view of itself has long been skewed, and that a multi-ethnic society has always existed here but Ireland did not hold a collective self-image of itself that acknowledged this reality. Crucially, at a time when it is almost impossible to perform for an audience of strangers surely it is imperative that the eventual return to storytelling is one that marks new inclusivity, the bringing of together lost voices through a process that honours all experiences equitably. Perhaps the moment has naturally arrived for a theatre of polyphonic transculturalism acting as a unique agent of change and exchange at a moment of demographic and social revision (McIvor and Spangler 2014, p.xi). Perhaps, in order to do this, we must in fact become the stranger. Not to each other (in spite of new human interruptions like social distancing), but strangers to the stories we once told ourselves about ourselves. This idea circles back to Homi Bhabha's proposition of a Third Space as discussed in Chapter 4 – a liminal space in which we may 'elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of ourselves' (1994, p.56). Theatre might very well be one of the only places where this liminal exchange is truly possible. Its prerequisite as a zone of 'active engagement' (McIvor and Spangler 2014, p.xvii) makes it the ideal space to play out such leaps of imaginative empathy and cultural exchange which cannot come into being without the efforts of both performer and audience in conscious correspondence. If we are to move away from reductive representation or the exoticisation of culture in theatre, then we must continually pose questions of our processes. Echoing Derriada I must therefore ask, who am I?; who are you?; what is our correspondence?; who are we?; what is coming? In deferring to these questions it seems possible that through continued interrogation we might eventually *become* together (Fitzpatrick 2016, p.6).

Research can never reach a definitive truth - instead, it is the search for the truth of a particular moment over and over again. So as to encompass the messiness of life enacted, I would like to propose an early iteration of an idea that draws on the many theatre and anthropological influences discussed in this thesis. I propose a Third Voice Theatre. The proposal draws conceptual inspiration from the notion of Bhabha's Third Space, performative characteristics of the voice, and Barbara Myerhoff's "third voice" approach to editing. Myerhoff never actually published a formal thesis on the ideas behind the notion of third voice research, but coined the phrase as a result of her ground-breaking

cultural study *Number Our Days* (See also Chapter 5.2: 'I will be a little old Jewish lady one day.'). In something of a move against the grain of conventional ethnographic styles of writing, Myerhoff blended her field observations with a kind of novelistic or fictive approach to the unfolding action in the Jewish senior's community centre. This was partially achieved through the creation of what Myerhoff termed 'definitional ceremonies – the orchestration of scenarios and situations wherein fragmented societies, like an elderly community of immigrants and Holocaust survivors, can self-define and be also witnessed (Myerhoff 1982, p.105).[54] In admitting to using a heavy selection and editing process in order to achieve this emerging third voice style, Myerhoff eschewed traditional ethnographic practices where personal editorialising had previously been shied away from. But in *Number Our Days*, Myerhoff allowed a certain fictiveness to 'infiltrate the empirical materials of her observations', which had previously been deemed a 'forbidden' expression of linguistic pleasure in ethnographic reportage (Kaminsky 1992, p.125). Though the presence of a third voice space was not a constant outcome within her work, Myerhoff believed that the moments when it occurred presented new discoveries and communal beliefs and values (Vivienne 2016, p.89). *Number Our Days* (and Myerhoff's later concerns around the responsibility of the ethnographer in editing the participant's words) is cited as having had a transformative effect on her approach to the study of society and culture, and lasting impact on the fields of ethnography and documentary-making (Vivienne 2016, p.88).

Here Shall We Rest is an example of how theatre can comfortably inhabit and relay a third space between experiences by acknowledging the unique positionalities of all involved. This is an emergent space, and having only conducted one experiment in this territory I cannot yet offer a fully determined methodology for future work. The methodology evolved alongside the context present. What I can offer is an understanding of misconceptions I made of this research at the outset which provided a lasting lesson. The contention is that I set out to facilitate a "cross-cultural" encounter through theatre, when in actual fact that label lacks some very important nuance. The Irish-Jewish and the Irish are, of course, of a shared culture albeit with particular traditions. It seems obvious now, but in the very early days of the work I may have conflated the idea of "culture" and "tradition" by initially over-emphasising the hyphen and the inherent differences it presents, rather than by working it, as Fine says. I had defined the hyphen and its borders

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[54] Myerhoff created a number of these definitional ceremonies at the Jewish centre, for example, a weekly Living History class, and the graduation from same on completion of the course.

from the outset, rather than allowing all its richness and complexity to reveal itself to me. In the end, the organic research peregrination worked the hyphen *for* me by providing participants who satisfied many more permutations of the experience of being Jewish in Ireland (and variously, some cross-cultural experiences) than that of the rigid labelling I began my journey with. I rest in agreement with Greenwood who says of her work that it seeks to record the rich texture of experience (2005, p.6), just as Ingold's emphasis is to record the experience of being alive in a world that is alive to us (2018, 00:42:20). In reflecting on her own experiences, Myerhoff sums up precisely the lessons present in her ethnographic fieldwork -

> It is full of teachings: about the importance of stories and visibility as essential to meaningful survival; about the values and problems of participatory anthropology; about the nature and process of cultural transmission; about the necessity and power of performance and witnessing.
>
> (Myerhoff in Kugelmass 1988, p.267)

These same lessons are the goals of this arts practice research, and central to the evolution of a Third Voice Theatre methodology – to present the invisible story in an act of anthropological and cultural transmission, so as to experience and witness, through leaps of imaginative empathy, the perspective of the Other.

Chapter 9: Conclusion - Waking from the Fever Dream…

9.1 Gaining consciousness

I started this thesis journey with a personal exegesis of my inclinations as a storyteller, first and foremost. This was important for two reasons – firstly because I wanted for you, the reader, to understand a little more about me, the person, outside of the rigidity of processes of data collection, high theory and deep philosophy. Secondly, I needed to remind myself of where the origins of my passion for storytelling lie, and why this 'hard-wired' propensity for human interest narratives makes me the right person to undertake this practice research. I examine some of the reasoning behind practice research as a mechanism for asking questions about cultural identity, and how I came to rest on focussing the exploration around the Jewish community in Ireland. The Introduction also lays out the wider cultural context from which this research was born as a unique moment in Irish history, when notions of ourselves as Irish were being interrogated in the arts and in politics against the backdrop of the Decade of Commemorations of Irish independence. This idea is presented as a prelude to the overall question at the heart of this interrogation – if we are seeking to reinvent the presentation of ourselves, ergo all voices within Irish society, then what were the reasons for the gaps or shortcomings in the representation of some of these voices, particularly in Irish theatre.

Chapter 1 explains some historical circumstances for the presence of a Jewish community here, with the aim of clarifying their particular location within Irishness, as expressed by internal story and external commentary. This chapter looks predominantly at the social history of the community and how this experience has arguably been underwritten in academia, but perhaps overly attended to by memoir and biographical contributions. The chapter looks at contrary arguments regarding the arrival myths associated with a Jewish presence in Ireland, and how tinderbox moments like The Limerick Boycott of 1904 were hugely significant to the perception of the Jewish community, and how these moments might be incorporated into the final play to be made. This chapter also looks at how mid-

century Irish politics was deeply prejudiced against any intervention to help Jews fleeing Nazi Germany during World War II, and whether the lasting effects of similarly negative attitudes might still be perceptible amongst wider Irish society.

Chapter 2 offers a critique of some examples of Jewish and Irish-Jewish representation in theatre, literature and film and how their portrayals may have shaped, or continue to shape, audience perception of Jewish identity. I look at two of the most famous examples of Jewish experience – Shylock and Leopold Bloom – as fundamental referential pillars for many, and how these figures continue to intersect with contemporary issues of antisemitism or misrepresentation. I look at some of the scant examples of Jewish characters and stories from Irish theatre and film of the last 100 years, and how most examples rarely deviate from stereotypical and staid representations of Jewish life. This chapter serves as a kind of cautionary tale for my own work in that these are the types of accepted conventions of representation that I endeavoured to deviate from.

Chapter 3 seeks to address the heritage and lexicons around the idea of a culture as "Other" or "stranger", and why these might be used with reference to the Jewish community. The overall objective of this chapter is to explore some of the theoretical concepts which look at how various modes of Othering can occur, as per Brons' 'Two Dimensions of Othering' (2015, p.72). This is done in order to present some of the ways in which Jewish societies in the diaspora experience the phenomenon of Othering, through Sartre's theory of the Jew as perpetually Other. I also examine how Othering manifested within colonial Irish society, where the Jew was subordinate to the already subordinate Irish. I look at racism and discrimination against the community in contemporary and political Ireland, and how some of the participants came to express this in their interviews. I look at some of the ways in which self-Othering can occur within Jewish identity, and how the overall identity is littered with cultural ambiguity given a long history of migration and dispersal. Lastly, I propose my own Otherness within the research context as an outsider to the culture, and how my work could see to avoid any further social distancing of this minority. The reflection section that follows (I) speaks to the idea of cultural appropriation, in what ways Jewish culture might be appropriated and whether any incidences of this can actually achieve a reclaiming of culture and space.

Some further theoretical and philosophical ideas are then offered. In particular those that had a lasting impression on my approach to the practice, given my concerns about the

work being misconstrued as a negative Othering of the community. Chapter 4 looks at two major 20th century philosophers with regard to my research concerns. Derrida and his theory of *différance* as a way of deconstructing negative lexicons implied by the terms "Other" or "stranger". This theory is considered in the context of making an exposition of identity politics as an equitable discourse for all. Similarly, Derrida's notion of *hauntology* is referred to as a means of interrogating accepted narratives about Irishness, who we consider the Irish to be, who the Jewish community here are. But perhaps the most profoundly impactful philosophical ideas I encountered were those of Emmanuel Levinas and his work on the face of the stranger. This was hugely significant for the development of my practice for a number of reasons – his ideas spoke to an embodied experience of the stranger which, as an actor, I could relate deeply to and had perhaps been searching for a key to bridging theory and practice such as this. Here I speak about my own encounter with the face of the stranger, and how this experience is perhaps one of the underlying reasons for the existence of this research project. Pushing through some further critical material on hyphen or third space identity (that is, identities and experience outside of the dominant cultural narrative), I arrive at a proposition for the work I have made or would make in this vein again – Third Voice Theatre.

From here the thesis tracks the evolution of my methodological framework for the kind of practice research I propose. Chapter 5 addresses my methodological framework, drawn from a number of sources across the disciplines of social science, anthropology, performance studies and theatre research, inspired by Conquergood's "map and story" metaphor as a way to think about relaying alternative methods of knowledge gathering. Here I examine some of the cautions around ethical data collection from contemporary exponents in the field of social and qualitative research. I detailed how Barbara Myerhoff's seminal study *Number Our Days* was hugely influential in the drawing up of my initial research ethics and proposed interview style. I describe the data gathering process and my early feelings of how collaborative processes like this reveal unique third spaces, or third voices, of creation between the participants and the researcher / maker. This chapter also reflects on some of the major problems encountered at this stage of the research. On one hand, there was the accusation by spontaneous correspondence that the work would result in the further negative Othering of the Irish-Jewish community. On the other, my own mismanagement of relationships and schedules caused unnecessary delays to the realisation of the practice element of the research. Lastly is the acknowledgement that, for some, the framing of this work as a study of Jewish Ireland by a non-Jewish

person was counter-constructive and could affirm negative perception of the community simply by singling it out as an experience to be explored.

After a viewing of the practice research itself during the Interval, the following reflection section (II) explores my experience of training in the physical theatre methods of Jerzy Grotowski, and how these came to inform the development of the dybbuk character. This reflection also asks whether it is useful to use the metaphors of liminality and possession in relation to the question of staging Jewish (and multicultural) identity in Ireland. Chapter 6 then looks to the folkloric and aesthetic inspiration for *Here Shall We Rest*, and the use of S. Ansky's play *Der Dibuk* as a foundational inspiration for the conceptual framing of the data collected. Here I chart charts Ansky's own ethnographic journey documenting the passing of Russian Jewish culture in the early 20th century, and how this trend was coined much later as 'salvage ethnography', where the culture or community in question is in need of some preservation. I detail my meeting with Jewish playwright and academic Julia Pascal, and how this encounter shaped the early dramaturgy of the play through the proposition of some key questions and insights into the area of Jewish identity. Lastly, this chapter explains how I came to settle on the folkloric figure of a dybbuk as the central focus for the practice research, and the ways this figure might be pertinent to metaphors for the Jewish community in Ireland as a spectre or mediator between differing cultural experiences of subject and audience.

Chapters 7 and 8 are intended as further exposition on the creative decisions made during the practice research. The first is a breakdown of the *Here Shall We Rest,* scene by scene, detailing where and how additional material outside of the verbatim interview texts was used to form the entire piece. The second examines the central aesthetic significance of the olive tree within the context of this research question, and also the wider creative process and collaborations that took place on the journey to performance. The reflection (III) section that follows Chapter 8 is a further exegesis on how perhaps *not* to go about staging culture in 2020, and how Third Voice Theatre methodology might actually manifest.

9.2 Find an Ending

Learn improvisation technique at any acting school, and you will often be told to "find an ending" for your scene mid-flow. To come to an agreement with your fellow actors, in the throes of spontaneous story-making, about how this new story might neatly be drawn to a conclusion because the scene has already gone on too long, or any decent plot lines have been blocked sufficiently so as to halt any interesting progression of the narrative. It's the first rule of Improv club. This is the "find an ending" moment of this research, where the history, perspectives, and social background of the subject are deeply entangled, but necessary to qualify why this research makes an important and original contribution to the field of practice research in theatre studies. Ridout states that the question of making this kind of practice research ethical, particularly one which focuses on a contentious issue like cultural identity, often becomes a matter of form versus content; that the relationships which evolve out of the process are more important than the communication of a single ideological objective (2009, p.49). Arguably in this case, I needed both the form (the making) and the content (the message) to be equitable at all times given my position to the subject as a cultural outsider. Using, as I did, narrative, reflective, and creative processes as interpretive tools broadens the traditional boundaries of any research journey considerably (Yardley 2008, para. 1). I experimented with the form of a traditional academic conclusion by designating the three Reflections sections to thoughts on the major recurring issues of concern or consideration that arose throughout. I maintain that the critical approach undertaken was correct given that the staging of Jewish identity in an Irish context had to date remained unsatisfactorily explored, both academically and practically. Taking all these factors into consideration I feel it is helpful to divide my concluding thoughts into two sections here, so as to synthesise the arguments in favour of undertaking research of this kind. The first section of the chapter will therefore reflect on the overall research inputs and outcomes in the context of my research argument. The second section acknowledges my own conclusions from the deeply personal location within the work. Lastly, I will consider where Third Voice Theatre might be taken in the future, despite the infancy of the idea, and conclude that, unlike with improv, there is perhaps no ending to be found here after all.

Casting the net as wide as I have in order to satisfy the needs and concerns of my research question is not without its quandaries. There is no specific or pre-existing methodology

which satisfies all the entanglements of this work and how they might be brought together succinctly. That is something that I must work towards as this journey comes to settle in my mind, and my heart, and my gut. And yet, as Yardley says, using such a broad range of narrative, reflective, and creative processes as interpretive tools was absolutely necessary to contextualise, hypothesise and materialise these thoughts. My contribution is partially thus – to comprehensively question why Jewish life has been unsatisfactorily represented in Irish theatre thusfar, where representation of Irishness remain synonymous with homogenous white, or Catholic, or male-dominated narratives. By addressing this issue, we might then be able to reason why wider multicultural experience continues to remain neglected on the Irish stage. This practice research has uncovered another cultural life in Ireland – a richly diverse and provoking diaspora, drawn to traditionally Irish sensibilities of family, complex spirituality, and a connectedness to the land. Undoubtedly, I am still haunted by the possibility that the making of the work from an outsider's perspective (nay, privilege) might perpetuate the exoticisation or exclusion of a minority. Whole-hearted intentions to facilitate intercultural or inter-perspective discourse are no longer enough. In many scenarios we still tolerate an everyday, "benign" commentary on the presence of Others, their heritage, their difference, which sneak into polite conversation to sit there, unchallenged. I know this to be true because I have witnessed it through the very process of doing this practice research, and through bearing witness to the testimony of those who have experienced it first-hand. Phelan suggests that 'the "discovery" of otherness is often a recognition of a part of ourselves we have not fully discovered or developed' (2017, p.73). Adopting the stance that Other does not necessarily exist outside of ourselves, the process then becomes one of understanding who *we* are, as opposed to as who *you* are. Chin counters that 'a recognition of specificity, not just an accounting of equivalence' in order to achieve authentic inclusion for all in new societies and representations becomes necessary at this point (1991, p.86). All processes of representation and interpretation should circle back to questions of parity, transparency and equality, but the dynamics of these processes need to be malleable enough to fit differing circumstances, cultures and contexts, and of course, what we might potentially have to learn about ourselves. This research does not conclude with a "one-size-fits-all" approach to making theatre on culture; I don't propose a comprehensive way to "do" an ethical minority experience in theatre, to quote Freeman.. Instead, this work tries to provide an overall 'language for understanding theatre as an intercultural, intersubjective, ethical encounter' (Freeman 2017, p.27). However, I can identify three major components which I would take forward to further practice, and which may

constitute the fundamentals of a Third Voice Theatre, and its potential contributions in ethnography and the discipline of theatre.

Aural: The first is continued listening to what had been voiced, as the proposed name implies. A constant referral back to the source, not for approval or permission, but to affirm that what has been said has been properly heard which can then be interpreted by the artist. In processes which don't involve the use of verbatim material this might simply be a best practice scenario of employing cultural consultants to work on a project, a space where multiple perspectives are afforded privilege. In Reflection I, I illustrated how an omission of this space can have calamitous results for the creative process in multicultural contexts, even when a production considers itself "woke" through its very subject matter. In my case this was literally achieved through hours of listening and relistening to the recorded interview material collected, getting to know the participants through the particular moment we had shared together. The experience of the ear is hugely important to me – I wager this sounds like an obvious statement, but it was actually a significant realisation for me during this process. My Master's degree was a practice research piece that examined the phenomenological experience of deconstructing the aural and visual experiences of a live radio drama performance, so perhaps this discovery is not entirely surprising.[55] It was through this detailed listening that I truly understood what was being said, and where I think the bond of collaboration between my research and the participants' contribution was forged. The design of an off-stage voice as the supporting character (and the collaboration on original music with a number of artists) further elevated my own aural experience, and forced me to become attuned to the audience's own aural experience. Looking back, I think I might have been trying to simulate a sweet spot somewhere between the experience of real intimacy that a beautifully crafted radio feature documentary can afford, and the alchemy of the live (visual) theatre experience. This emphasis of listening also looks to the deeply humanistic and empathetic approaches of Myerhoff's anthropology and Levinasian philosophy. Initially I approached the material from an editorial and performance perspective – I would craft a better play with repeatedly listening, resulting in a more authentic performance. But had I not spent so

[55] This realisation reminded me of Complicite's 2016 high-tech production, *The Encounter*, which used binaural sound to replicate the human hearing experience as if the audience were alone in a room with the actor, or in the imagined space where the narrative action is set.

much time studying the hours of material I may have missed some very subtle, yet hugely important dramaturgical moments. Like, for example, this from the final scene of the play:

> ***Woman 4:***
> ***I can't stand it! I wish I wasn't Jewish! (Laughs) It's too complicated. It's so complicated! Also it's really interesting and it's amazing when I talk to-you know and I say, I'm doing this research and the responses are fantastic - everybody's thoroughly interested and supportive and it's a fab journey. But I'm also a bit scared. I'm scared of being attacked I think. You know, either just verbally or… I mean sometimes I just think, well what if I present my play eventually and somebody decides they don't like Jews or they don't like Israel and decides to attack me...***

Completely unprompted in the interview setting, Woman 4 speaks about her own work as if she is speaking my feelings exactly. Not that I am Jewish, but all of the complicated feelings that arose from undertaking a journey through my connection to the identity. It was frustrating and enlightening in equal measure – I too, was afraid at times of being attacked in the same way she expresses. That I could have written these words myself (or perhaps could not have) was the synthesis of the collaborative experience in the third space, a revelation I missed on my initial listening.

Foundational narratives: The second key element of a Third Voice Theatre might be the continued use of existing narratives, folkloric and mythical, on which to hang stories of contemporary experience. These kinds of stories are often universal enough to transcend the boundaries of culture, but honourable to their origins if from *within* the culture in question. Kearney refers to this as a '*quasi-universalisation* of remembrance, where our own memories – personal and communal – can be exchanged with others in very different times and places, where the familiar and the foreign can change hands' (2002, p.63). The fable of *The Heart and The Spring*, as told at the end of *HSWR* and in Ansky's play, serves as a useful metaphor here. All things desire, on some level, a return to the source of their being (Zhitlowsky 1971, p.15). This idea speaks to the Levinasian

principle of locating that which is essential in and about each of us, or each of our stories. Foundational narratives like those exhibited in traditional folktale offer the possibility of a return to the source, to the quasi-universal and communally understood meanings that Kearney argues we all share access to. And yet, they are elevated enough above the subjective everyday that they can encompass a wider range of themes and voices without direct conflict. Whilst the figure of the dybbuk originates from deep within Jewish identity, it also became a useful buffer between a perceived declaration of definitive experience through representation, and any lack of knowledge of the subject from the audience's perspective. That is to say, the figure presents enough universal familiarity that it could be employed to open up a very particular discourse. I stumbled upon the trope of the dybbuk which spoke to this research question on so many levels. If using folklore again, I would want to find a similar fit to the subject that is more than parallel, more a morphing of subject and conceptualisation.

Embodiment: Lastly is the issue of embodiment. In a letter dated September 1963 to Eugenio Barba, Grotowski proffers the following advice to the young practitioner:

> You write that you would like to see some concrete results of your work. Well, allowing me to tell you: you never see concrete results. Concrete results (particularly in such a fleeting art as theatre) I was born and die in the twinkling of an eye, and I believe it is a mistake to tie oneself down to these […] You really only possess *that what you have experienced*, and therefore (in theatre) that which you know and which can be verified in your own organism, your own concrete and daily individuality.
>
> (Barba 1999, p.123)

Were I to redo this research, I would have spent more time on my relationship to each participant in rehearsal, exploring what it actually means to embody another living story and to invite an audience to witness its telling. At the moment, I possess only my reflections on doing and experiencing rather a concrete process which might be honed and repeated in future iterations. In many ways, I allowed this experiment to happen to me – this is not the approach I would take again. I would now be equipped to apply some iteration of a Third Voice methodology.

Here again, the dybbuk metaphor proves itself a potent *camera obscura* through which an examination of Jewish identity, and multi or intercultural identities more generally speaking, is possible. Simply put, all of these elements collide at a version of the same question – what of the spirit survives the body in transition between on-going reinterpretations of self? If we zoom out, it is possible to see that the metamorphosis of Jewish society in Ireland, and of my Dybbuk from ignorant to informed, reflects the flux of cultural identity in wider Irish society today? Perhaps through the process of passing through these identities, my own processes of representation, acting and storytelling can be reborn with renewed truthfulness? I conclude this research at a moment when we are more and more shut away from one another than at any other moment in living memory. The idea of barriers and borders between each other is more prevalent than ever, but these are no longest distant geopolitical imaginings, invisible to the naked eye and keeping the stranger at bay. Instead, our homes have become the borders of COVID-19 – isolation is essential to public safety, and the shaking of hands is a ritual consigned to memory. And the world continues to construct more and more literal and figurative borders with the building of a wall between America and Mexico, the issue of whether a hard border will be reinstated between Ireland and Northern Ireland as a consequence of the Brexit negotiations, the annexation of Palestine, and the closure of vast tracts of European escape routes to fleeing migrants. The opportunity to meet face-to-face is reduced to imposed technological borders on account of issues of public safety. If these boundaries persist then surely the idea of separation, an increased sense of us-and-themness, will be allowed to persist unchallenged in society. If that is the case, if siege mentality and polarisation continues this way, then happenstance encounters with the stranger become less likely. And if that is the likely future we are heading towards, then representation, considered and ethical representation, becomes crucial in terms of the vindication of social values like accuracy, parity, and truth.

None of the aforementioned tools are new approaches, techniques or assertions. They are borrowed, toyed with, and entangled with other ideas from across the disciplines with the aim of opening up our theatre spaces to reflect who we actually are as a nation. These tools and inspirations have been applied in divergent ways to other storytelling processes in vastly different contexts from mine. However here, they co-exist as a wholly original approach to staging the Jewish community in Ireland. This is the leap I have made – that through the intra-action of this practice research I have, at the very least, begun a

conversation that has heretofore not been on the table. Mistakes are inevitable. Cultural fumbles and stumbles that accompany many journeys of getting to know the stranger. I look again to Ridout who states that in any process like this, '(t)he emphasis [must be] on openness and the establishment of space for the unknown, the unpredictable and the sheer 'otherness' of other people [...]' (2009, p.49). Integrity, achieved through a continued return to the source, is key. If we are lucky, the maps we uncover lead us to a third space of understanding, where our Third Voices might sing together.

9.3 Localism

Figure 26 (9.3): Rehearsing in the Halla, January 2019

Anthropologist Clifford Geertz said that, '[t]o an ethnographer, sorting through the machinery of distant ideas, the shapes of knowledge are always ineluctably local, indivisible from their instruments and their encasements' (1983 p.4). In-keeping with this sentiment I would like to speak briefly about my personal, local experience of staging this practice research at MIC.

Here Shall We Rest was created and staged at a particularly challenging moment of personal and professional upheaval, during which my confidence as both academic and actor were both at a low ebb. The play was developed and staged during a time of deep personal reflection, highly critical of the journey I had undertaken. In hindsight, the process of performing the piece became a sort of shedding of that period of difficulty quite literally through the skin of the Dybbuk undergoing a similar metamorphosis. The period of creation was kind of a rebirth during which time I began to trust my

performative instincts again and trust the belief that they would lead to a fruitful exposition of the theories and methodologies at hand. Performing as the Dybbuk afforded me a freedom to channel all the anxieties of this period into an embodied expression of deep-rooted uncertainty. A kind of katharsis became possible through the symbiosis of the real events that were happening to me at the time, and the emergence of the Dybbuk's journey at the centre of the practice. Working almost entirely alone, except for key moments in production, was both lonely and liberating. I worked this way intentionally in an effort to reassert my creative voice, which I felt I had been lost or stamped out in other, larger creative processes. Working alone was also an exercise in facing up to the possibility of failure – if the work didn't come together or was of a poor standard that would be entirely my fault. This was a new level of creative responsibility which I wanted to experience having previously relied on the advice and opinions of others, rather than asking for my own artistic approval. This work was a kind of coming back to my own source, resonant of so many of the themes at work in the play. There is also an aspect of this journey that is deeply spiritual, but I am not ready to commit these thoughts fully to the page. What I will say is that this process has made me question the predominantly unhappy experiences I have had in making new work for theatre to date (with the exception of this and a handful of other projects), and whether there might be a connection between that dissatisfaction and a disconnection from spirituality in theatre practice. There is more for me to uncover here – Grotowski and some others will play the Rabbi on this journey.

HSWR was the first piece of theatre to be staged in the recently refurbished *halla*, or studio space at MIC. The atmosphere of cleansing, renewal and the blank canvas-ness that lingered in the space were invigorating to both the rehearsals and final staging of the piece. Choosing to stage this work in-house, as opposed to at a commercial theatre venue, was both hugely rewarding and intimidating. I was surrounded by a supportive community of friends and peers who were intrigued by the work but also keen to see it succeed. The technical crew for production was made up of student volunteers from the Department of Drama & Theatre Studies who gave generously of their time and energy, and were more dedicated in their approach than many experienced professionals I have met in the industry. Working with this crew in the days leading up to performance were some of the brightest times of the whole process. Thanks to their energy, wit, focus and enthusiasm, any learning outcomes were reciprocal. Like the children of the Pied Piper, every day a new body would be added to the team, curious and eager to find out more

about making theatre of all shapes and sizes. It was thoroughly uplifting to watch them at work, and there is no doubt that their presence had a deeply positive kinetic effect on my own performance. I developed a close working relationship with my stage manager, Emily Waters, who herself was a final year student in Media Studies at the time. Emily gave everything to the project – positivity, calmness, comradery and professional skills – and questioned nothing. Her dramaturgical input was always bright and astute, and I feel extremely fortunate that Emily was available to the project at such a busy time in her own studies. I drew enormous comfort and inspiration from this crew and I sincerely hope it was a positive experience for them too. It is in this communal experience of theatre-making where the likes of Levinasian principles are truly put into action.

Figure 27 (9.3): *HSWR* Crew

Spearheading professional consultation on the project leading up to performance were Deirdre Dwyer as dramaturg, and Dr Michael Finneran as lighting designer. Deirdre is a long-term collaborator through our work in BrokenCrow, and close personal friend. At the time, she was also Theatre Artist-in-Residence at MIC and knew many of the students working with me on the project from her own work in that capacity. Deirdre's presence is always one of solution-orientated calm. She is a passionate, skilled and award-winning theatre designer and maker, who will always deliver the appropriate serving of honesty. She made my costume in a couple of hours, dressed the set with me, Googled how to stage a fake pint of stout with a convincingly foamy head, supervised the box office, and was a consultant to other members of the team at various points. In truth, the list of things she did in a couple of days on the production is endless. In these final nerve-wracking moments pre-production she was, as ever, my port in the storm.

Working in a creative capacity with your thesis supervisor is a daunting prospect. Perhaps this a hang-up from working with difficult and scrutinising directors in the past, as in this experience was an utterly generous one. Dr Finneran worked both dramaturgically and practically (as lighting designer) on *HSWR*. He consulted on the work at a number of key moments in its development – these were thought-provoking exchanges and always seeking the betterment of the concept and material. Two weeks prior to staging, I presented a rough rehearsal for Dr Finneran and a fellow PhD student from an entirely different discipline. This was honestly a most terrifying moment in my professional development. In commercial theatre we call this rough first rehearsal of the full play a "stumble-through" – the clue is in the name. Though signposted to be a sketchy first attempt at performing the play in its entirety, the actor always secretly hopes that this moment will be as triumphant as opening night. There are few situations more confronting than not being able to hide behind the smoke and mirrors of a realised production, hoping that somehow a glimmer of hope will shine through the lack of set, make up and props. Or that at least people will say something kind about the "potential" of the piece. Truly, these bare bones stumble-throughs are exposing, skin-crawling experiences. Though we had never worked in this capacity before and owing to his vast experience of working with actors, Dr Finneran was able to offer some key suggestions on how to improve the storytelling, textually and practically, as an outside eye. In particular, he offered suggestions about switching between characters and narrative modes for clarity, and how lighting changes assisted these transitions. Though I found this session a hugely daunting prospect, it was ultimately a fruitful creative and educational encounter for which I am very grateful. It was also enjoyable to work as a professional actor within the Department of Drama & Theatre studies at MIC, as performing wasn't something I had previously brought to my work there. Though the instinct might be to feel that there was something to prove, the reality was that the support given to me allowed me just to focus on the storytelling. That is always the actor's dream.

The comfort of traditional, fourth-wall performance is that the actor rarely ever sees the whites of the audience's eyes, despite always being aware of their shared presence in the dark. The reflexivity of the gaze in human transactions is non-existent in the darkness of traditional theatre and so the actor, above and apart from the spectators, is free to lose him or herself to the immediate action, unless interrupted. On this occasion, the audience were not only friends and supporters, but also colleagues, students, academic peers and

superiors, employers, artists and interviewees. To perform this work for them, quite different from any other work I have produced in terms of structural and conceptual experimentation, was hugely intimidating. I knew this audience and would encounter everyone who saw the work in the halls of the college or the staffroom at some point. Thankfully the reception to the play was hugely positive, with a number of colleagues keen to engage casually in feedback and critical reflection on the work after its production. What I enjoyed most about this period of shared reflection was encountering a number of people from across the disciplines who expressed their interest in the subject matter. Many of these people also shared that they had never properly taken the time to reflect on their personal attitudes towards the construction of their own national identity, our shared and changing national identities, or issues of antisemitism and racism in Ireland. Based on these informal encounters after the performance of *HSWR,* I believe that audiences left questioning their own positionality on these and similar issues, but I don't have any substantive proof that the sharing of these stories altered any existing opinion towards minority communities. However, the purpose of the work was not to change minds but to disrupt accepted, or the *hearsay* narratives that I had encountered about the Jewish community and to provoke further questioning around cultural inclusivity and celebration in Ireland. The interviewees who were able to attend, or who watched the recording of the performance at a later stage were hugely positive about the experience of seeing themselves in some way represented, and of hearing their opinions in an entirely new way. There was no negative feedback from the participants (I also approached them via email at a later date for written feedback), save for my mispronunciation of a couple of Yiddish words. They remained enthusiastic and generous, and yet I trusted each of them enough to tell me if and where I had made fundamental mistakes. All of this is to say that in the end, this process was a humbling one thanks to the openness of all those involved. To be on the receiving end of generosity and encouragement such as this is not always the case, but was the salve I needed at a difficult time.

9.4 The Third Voice speaks...

Yardley echoes my concerns about the pressure of producing quantifiable research outcomes in tacit processes such as this has been. She asks:

> How could I, as an artist, writer, and researcher best accommodate the transdisciplinary tensions (of language and meaning) and navigate the great sea of information, opinions, ideas, and prejudices that surround the development of any new transdisciplinary methodology in (as far as the social sciences are concerned) a relatively untried medium?
>
> (2008, para.10)

The course of action that I pursued here from its theoretical origins to their practical application must absolutely have another outing before I could be confident that a new transdisciplinary methodology might be discernible. What this practice research process has taught me, perhaps most crucially, is to try to pre-empt difficult questions by ensuring that I am first asking them of myself. Questions like, "Who are you Othering by this work, and at what points of intersection does this occur? Does the work succeed in disrupting dominant narratives, or does it perpetuate stereotypes? Have you invited all possible voices to speak? Can this work impact anything about the way Irish theatre is made, specifically in relation to our religious or ethnic minorities?"

All storytelling is about finding a way to show people the things they need to know so that they can confront them. We live in chaotic times. Thankfully this period affords artists, thinkers, activists and many more their own platform from which to counter the arbitrators of much of this chaos. Whilst it is arguably the ethical responsibility of storytellers to share narratives of disruption, it is also our ethical duty to be attuned to the moments when assisting others to tell their own story is the more fruitful and ethical path. A path of respectful intention, positive representation, space to be heard, and the means to express pride in difference without the fear of being ostracised. This kind of deep critical and reflexive engagement running in continued engagement with the source should make us more attuned to what Wynn refers to as 'the manufacturing, selection and manipulation of 'history' and 'memory' where, in an Irish context, this remains a concern (Wynn 2017, p.5). By moving beyond the staid and communal narratives of what Irishness means, we begin to move towards more sophisticated storytelling that tests the limits of stereotype and lazy representation, and the methodologies applied to achieve this departure. This process has not left me with a process, as such, but with a checklist to use in moving Third Voice Theatre on to something tangible in processes of intercultural exchange in performance. My next play, *Found*, is already in development, bearing the lessons of *Here Shall We Rest*. It is the story (in some way) of my family's deep and esoteric connection to the people and places of Newfoundland, Canada. It is a reverse

cultural genealogy that traces my personal connection forward from a place, as opposed to backwards to an origin. This story, unlike that of *Here Shall We Rest,* is one that I share with the subject beyond an affinity. In truth, I am the subject this time, and so the undertaking becomes as much about applying what I have learned here about Others to my own story.

In Newfoundland, when someone wants to know where you've come from, they ask "Who knit you?" So it is that I am knit from stories. From those of my family, and the stories that came before me. From Jewish friends and acquaintances. From my nightmares and dreams. From travels and adventures in strange places. From the ghosts of past lives, past characters and creations. From all the great thinkers who have versed me and rehearsed me. I shall rest here under this blanket of entangled stories, free now of fever dreams, until such time as our stories become new ones, continuing on.

Together.

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Appendix A: Participant Paperwork

Re.Membrance of Absence.

Towards a performative exploration of the Irish-Jewish experience.

Participant Information Sheet

What is this research about?

This Practice as Research (PaR) PhD project will explore representations of *Irish-Judaism* in contemporary Irish theatre, and will seek to investigate Irish-Judaism as a unique experience. Using the existing body of plays that deal with this subject (and some related literary works) as a preliminary backdrop, combined with interviews from members of the community I will create a new work for theatre which attempts to examine the complex identity of a minority component of the Irish cultural landscape.

Who is involved in carrying out this research?

Aideen Wylde is the researcher and artist leading this project. She is completing a PhD at the Department of Drama & Theatre Studies, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick. Her work is being completed under the supervision of Dr. Michael Finneran, Head of Department.

Why is this study being undertaken?

The aim of the performed and written work involved in this research is to challenge preconceived notions, positive and negative, about the Irish-Jewish community. It is also an opportunity to investigate and document the Irish-Jewish experience as very little exists academically regarding this subject. It can be argued that the community is underrepresented in theatre and the arts, and as an actor and graduate of the HETI Certificate in Holocaust Education I feel strongly about contributing to the field of Jewish studies.

What is involved for participants?

Those who consent to be involved can take part in a number of ways:

- An hour-long informal interview, in an agreed location or the participant's home which will be recorded and used as the basis for the creation of a new piece of theatre on the subject.
- As an outsider I feel it is essential to engage fully with the rich cultural world of Judaic practices (e.g. High Holiday celebrations; Shabbat dinner; preparation of kosher meals; arts events; meeting with Yiddish speakers). I would greatly appreciate any opportunity to participate in or observe these traditions.
- Sharing family history, genealogical material and oral histories in organised focus group settings.

Who will have access to any information gathered?

As the primary researcher, I will be the only person with access to the names of volunteer participants and the information they provide individually. During the transcription of interviews, all names and locations will be

changed to ensure anonymity. My supervisor, Dr. Michael Finneran, will have access to these encoded transcripts. However, participants can also withdraw the right to anonymity if they feel certain details should not be omitted.

Participants will be asked at the end of their interview whether they would be happy for their contribution to be used anonymously, but possibly *in verbatim* (i.e. word for word) in the theatrical work created. Participants are asked to bear in mind that the aim is to create a piece of theatre which explores as complete a cross section of the Irish-Jewish experience as possible. To the best of my knowledge, this has not been undertaken in Irish theatre to date.

A request to use any information in anonymous verbatim will be issued to the participant in question prior to usage.

Right to withdraw

You are free to withdraw from the research at any time without giving a reason and without consequence. This can be done by contacting Aideen Wylde at the details below.

What happens to the data after it has been completed?

In accordance with the MIC Record Retention Schedule all research data will be stored for the duration of the project plus ten years: i.e. until 2029. This allows for development and dissemination of the research material.

Contact details

If at any time you have any queries/issues regarding this study please contact:

Aideen Wylde

Mary Immaculate College

South Circular Road

Limerick

aideen.wylde@mic.ul.ie

If you have concerns about the study and wish to contact someone independent, you may contact:

MIREC Administrator

Mary Immaculate College

South Circular Road

Limerick.

mirec@mic.ul.ie

+353 61 204515

Thank you for taking the time to read about this research.

Re:Membrance of Absence.

Towards a performative exploration of the Irish-Jewish experience.

Informed Consent Form

Dear Participant,

As outlined in the **participant information sheet**, this study will investigate perspectives on the Irish-Jewish experience from within and outside of the community, in order to create a new piece of writing for theatre based on the information gathered.

Information taken from interviews and used in the making of this piece of theatre will be fictionalised (false names, locations etc.), unless an agreement to waive anonymity has been reached.

The participant information sheet should be read fully and carefully before consenting to take part in the research study.

Your anonymity is assured and you are free to withdraw from the experiment at any time. However, if you see fit you are also welcome to waive your right to anonymity at any point.

Please read the following statements before signing the consent form:

- I have read and understood the **participant information sheet.**

- I understand what the project is about and for what purpose the information gathered will be used.

- I understand that my identity will be protected throughout the study, unless I grant permission for my real name to be used.

- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the project at any stage without giving any reason.

Name (PRINTED): ____

Name (Signature): ____

Date: ____

Re:Membrance of Absence.

Towards a performative exploration of the Irish-Jewish experience.

Conversation Topics

- Can you start by talking me through a typical day in your life?
- How do you spend weekends?
- Can you tell me a little of your family history?
- Do you keep a kosher home? Can you explain that a little to me?
- Where do most of your immediate family live? And your more distant relatives?
- Would you consider Ireland to be a racist country?
- Have you ever had any experience of racism as an Irish person?
- Have you ever had any experience of anti-Semitism?
- Is it more difficult to practice your religious/traditional customs in Ireland than in other places?
- How would you describe your identity?
- What do you take pride in?
- What does it mean to be Jewish in Ireland in 2016?
- Do you have a favourite story/anecdote from the Irish-Jewish community? Could you share it with me?
- Do you have a favourite story or lesson from the Torah, the Talmud, or Jewish folklore and could you share it with me?

- Can you tell me about some of the families and people you grew up with in Ireland?
- How is the Ireland of your childhood different to today?
- How does your experience of Judaism today differ from your childhood?
- How does your secular Jewish identity inform your daily life?
- How did you come to live in Ireland? *
- What are the biggest similarities between the Irish and Jewish traditions?
- What is the most important thing about the Irish-Jewish community?
- Is there anything you would specifically like me to know about your experience of being Jewish?
- Is there anything you would like to clarify for those who know little or nothing about the Jewish faith?
- What is your favourite food to prepare and eat? Does this have any significance personally or culturally?

*For participants who identity as Jewish in religion or culture but were born outside of the country.

Appendix B: Filmed performance of *Here Shall We Rest*

Final performance of *HSWR* filmed by Dominik Kosicki, RedPaw Media 8th February 2019.

https://vimeo.com/317992892

Password: redpaw

(See back cover of this thesis for attached DVD Film of performance on page marked "Extras")

Appendix C: Play text, *Here Shall We Rest.*

Here Shall We Rest...

"Wherefore, from highest height to Deepest Depth below

Has the soul fallen?

Within itself, the Fall contains the Resurrection."

The play is a series of monologues and vignettes, styled after influential work like Ana Deavere-Smith's *Fires In The Mirror,* and deeply imbued with the supernatural folklore of S. Ansky's 1920 play, *The Dybbuk*.

The audience is seated on three sides. The central playing space is an abstract landscape in the centre of which sits a large olive tree atop a mound of earth, its roots visible in the dirt. Carved into the trunk is the Hebew word *"Polin"* – *"here shall you rest."* The tree can be climbed – a seat hidden in the branches enables the performer to sit on top of the tree itself. Also upright in the dirt are knives, forks and spoons - an old method of koshering *traif* or spoiled cutlery. The angles of everything are distorted – this place should be familiar, but it's not.

The voice of the Rabbi serves a metaphor both for the character of the rabbi from the original play that inspired this work, but also as the voice of my scholarly guides throughout this research process. Snippits of audio or video collected during the research and development phase are projected onto the floor through the leaves of the tree whilst the dybbuk digs for another item of costume, or signifier. These clips all relate to stories from around the world that occurred during the research and which have some bearing on Jewish or Irish identity and experience.

The piece is performed by one actor, but many voices appear in the sound design. Some of the interview material has been dramatised, as opposed to verbatim retelling of events.

Prologue – (Re)Birth

The Rabbi (v/o):

Consider the soul. It cannot be seen, yet some say each among us has ten thousand unseen at his left hand, and ten thousand more at his right. In the divine kinesis of destruction and repair, the energy of these spirits flows forth from the heavens and returns upwards again through good deed, ritual and prayer.

Most of the time...

Not like that time, for example, when the Spirit of the Lord departed Saul and an evil demon appeared in the Lord's place to torment him.

Suddenly from the earth a hand appears, muddy and grasping. Clawing desperately in the dirt, a creature emerges in what once were white robes. A dybbuk is resurrected, awkwardly and screeching. It attempts to be, as the rabbi continues -

Rabbi: Behold one such soul displaced from their divine journey – a neither here nor there. A dybbuk - a dislocated entity caught in the act of eternal storytelling. Not one and not another, it cannot be either without the other.

The dybbuk lets out a wail –

Rabbi: Dybbuk, in this place you will bring life to other lives as a channel for the stories of others, so that through your toil, both you and we might be set free.

And who am I, Dybbuk? Well, I am every symbol and every signifier; every light at the end of every tunnel. I am God and Gandhi; Yoga and Yoda...I'm even that guy at the music festival who made the really good falafel.

Dybbuk: I beheld a good dream – a good dream I beheld...

Rabbi: All will become clear in time. But first, a test to determine your readiness for the road ahead.

Snap lighting change to a spotlight on the Dybbuk and the Mastermind theme tune kicks in. The dybbuk is zombified throughout.

Rabbi: Your name please?

Dybbuk: Dee... Book?

Rabbi: Occupation?

Dybbuk: Supernatural entity.

Rabbi: And your specialist subject is "Judaism for Gentiles".

Dybbuk: It is?

Rabbi: It is! And so, with 60 seconds on the clock your time starts...NOW! What is Juadism?

Dybbuk: The religious beliefs of more that 14 million people throughout the world.

Rabbi: Correct. What is the Torah?

Dybbuk: God's written message and teaching for the Jewish people.

Rabbi: Correct. How many Tribes of Israel are there said to have been?

Dybbuk: 12.

Rabbi: Correct. What is Yiddish?

Dybbuk: Yiddish is a language spoken by the Jews of Eastern Europe.

Rabbi: Translate the following everyday saying into Yiddish, "I'm overcome with emotion."

Dybbuk: "Oy vey, I'm verklempt."

Rabbi: I'll take it. What is Zionsim?

Dybbuk: Zionism is a movement for the return of the exiled Jews of the world to the Land of Israel.

Rabbi: Do you have to be religious to be a Zionist?

Dybbuk: No you do not.

Rabbi: Correct. What is anti-semitism?

Dybbuk: Hostility towards Jewish people.

Rabbi: Complete this famous quotation –

(The time's up buzzer sounds)

I've started so I'll finish – from the 1971 movie of the same name set in the Russian Jewish village of Anatevka: "Without our traditions our lives would be as shakey as a..." blank on the blank -

Dybbuk: As a...em...

Rabbi: I'll have to hurry you...

Dybbuk: As a...emmm...

Rabbi: Oh come on, this is the one you don't know?

Dybbuk: I've gone...blank!

Rabbi: ***(Sigh)*** Well Dybbuk, we may have to assume that some divine mystery is at work in the choosing of you for this journey – one which will reveal itself to us in due course. Hopefully...

Let us begin. Everything you need can be found at your feet.

An inhalation and the dybbuk begins to dig frantically in the dirt.

Rabbi: Legend goes that when the Chosen People arrived in Europe, as the winds carried verses from the Bible mixing with them Jewish prayer and Yiddish song, these first sojourners came upon a tree in the forest inscribed with the Hebrew word, "Polin" – 'Here shall you rest, in exile".

The dybbuk unearths a brightly coloured necklace and a box of Green Tea Machi balls – the first interviewee. In a ritualistic fashion the dybbuk dons the necklace and Woman 2 appears.

A shimmering light is visible in the hole where the dybbuk emerged, and for some of the monologue the dybbuk stares into its depths.

In the distance, the sound of birds and JCBs.

Chapter One – The Holy Well

Woman 1:

So I guess in the beginning I, it's true story, like I fell in love with Ireland because of "Into The West" the movie. And like, I saw it when I was 17, I'd say or something like that? And I just like, I dunno d'ya know, something

captivated me in the story, the legend… "Tayto! Tayto!", and the whole thing. (Yeah, yeah, yeah.) And I really, I dunno, just something kind of…the view, and the greenery, and the smallness and…

So then when I came, I just came, I just bought one-way ticket with my all my savings and I just came. And I end up working in the first day with travellers and different immigrant's kids and do workshops, and it was amazing. And then when I came back the second time, I came to study community development and eh, ended up working with the travellers for like six years. So that's…why I came, I guess. You know, for, from Ireland side. The why I left is a different story.

Like I never wanted to live in Israel. It just, dunno. I just felt at home. And I never felt at home before. So… It's a beautiful mystery, right, because I felt at home straight away. It wasn't like, "Oh, it's a bit foreign". I felt at home. Like people thought I was there for years when I was a week, you know, so it's like…some of it is a bit magic.

The booming voice of the Rabbi interrupts the dybbuk's flow.

Rabbi: There is a divine connection between the Celtic peoples of Ireland and the 12 Tribes of Israel, did you know that? Ties that are more ancient than you could ever imagine.

On the tree paper figures appear – characters from the following story, which the dybbuk uses to illustrate.

Vignette – The Stone of Destiny

It begins with a dream...The man called Jacob went out from Beersheba after a terrible fight with his brother, and arriving at a certain place he decided to stay there for the night. Jacob took a stone and putting it at his head, he lay down to sleep. And in his dreams that night the door between the heavens and the earth was opened to him. A great ladder, miles and miles in height, reached all the way up to God's kingdom with the angels of the Lord ascending and descending upon it. Then God said to Jacob, "I will make your heirs as great in number as the dust of the earth". When Jacob woke, he understood that the rock upon which he had laid his head was now holy because God had visited him there. Jacob took the stone and set it into the earth poured oil upon it, anointing its holiness....

Am I waffling? I'm waffling aren't I? Let me see...Ah yes, the pharoah's daughter -Scota.

The Dybbuk holds up a paper ancient Egyptian princess.

Many moons later, Scota brought the stone from the land of Judah all the way across the seas as a gift for the peoples of Scotland who would in time become her descendants. But along the way, the stone came to rest in Ireland at Tara - the seat of the High Kings. Once again it was set into the earth and became the seat upon which future High Kings took up their throne.

"Lia Fáil" – "The Stone of Destiny."

So that's how the first Judeans came to Ireland. I suppose you could say they followed their Destiny...

The Dybbuk hangs the complete paper chain story of the Lia Fáil from the braches of the tree. Woman 2 reappears -

Woman 1:

The other reason I think, I…the temperature? I don't feel, I don't feel comfortable in a warm temperature. Like I hate sweating. I hate sweating. Like the sensory feeling, I hate it. I love cool air around me. The…light. The green? The space that the people give you? I really…Like I'm hyper-sensitive so it's like, all of those things were really challenging in Israel because everybody's on top of each other. And here it was like, *(sighs deeply).*

You just feel comfortable and… I dunno like something like that is… I dunno…

I lived on the Aran Island it was…strange, kind of. It was a family with four children and the father used to be a priest, then he became a Cel- he left, he got married and then he became a Celtic priest which was kind of invent a title. He bought his, eh, his eh, um…priest outfit on eBay. Two hundred eh, dollars. So I…read all the Celtic, eh, books and…I didn't – well he – he wasn't a very big factor or like, influence. The, living on the island was massive…I, I had a really bad injury when I was on the island. It was a kind of a bike thing. I had to be flown out from the island and like crazy stuff. But my healing process was so special. I visited the…holy well? In the Aran Islands there's a lot of holy wells and next to my house there was a really special one…

The dybbuk sits at the foot of the tree.

Like I fell asleep next to it, just like sitting in the sun and it was just like… The nature have such power, you know like the kind of, the…there's something very strong and I think there it's like kind of connecting to the earth and the water.

I dunno just…super powerful.

Woman 1 fades.

Rabbi: What's in a name, Dybbuk? Jew; Semite; Hebrew; Israelite; Gúidach; The Chosen People; Múintir na hÉireann. You can get trapped in the kingdom of names you know...

The dybbuk digs in the dirt once more, locating a men's jacket and scarf, too big.

Chapter Two – Trapped in the Kingdom of Names

Man 3: Are you familiar with the blessing formulas? They're all pretty standard in Judaism. It's kind of interesting because they have their own three-part structure. A prayer in three acts. There you go!

Well, the thing is that every blessing starts off with "Baruch ata Adonai" - "Blessed are you G-d" (or whatever you replace Him with), em...and so there's the blessing. Then there's the declaration of, "You're pretty much bigger than anything that exists". The traditional form is, "Melachaulam - King of the Universe", which sounds a lot more like Heman and you know the...Zeus-like quality. And then, eh...the actual thing you're thankful for, so...like when you see a rainbow you say, "who keeps the covenant" or, "who remembers the covenant". So, that's like a very traditional blessing...usually has a lot to do with natural phemomena. Here's fun one – the blessing upon awaking and, eh, peeing. Yeah so when you awake you say, "who has restored my soul to me", but you know that one comes from a time that people did die – well people still do die in their sleep – so you know, you're like, "oh cool, I woke up again!" It's something along the lines of "...who made all the openings in the body and keeps all of them functioning." It's totally nitty-gritty biological, right, so some of these things are all about, " Aw, damn.

What if I wasn't working today?"

Where it becomes interesting with Judaism is that Judaism strictly speaking as I say it is ...religion, but "to be Jewish" carries the connotation of the religion plus the cultural. And so, for a lot of people they say one thing and mean both. For many other people they say...both,and mean one thing that includes the other in a...an unspoken way. Usually it's, "I'm Jewish", meaning I'm culturally Jewish and yes, I also go to synagogue but, but what else would I be? I wouldn't be...a Jewish-Catholic? Well maybe you would, I dunno.

There's a reason why there's so many JewBhus around – a JewBhu is a Jewish-Bhuddist. There's... HinJews...eh...there's a modern Messianic one that actually is like basically Christian plus Jewish, and they're the "Jews for Jesus".

The Irish=Jewish community is made up of...multiple generation Irish, of...one or two generation recent...eh...émigrés from post-Holocaust...eh, who came from maybe England or other parts of Europe...eh, visitors who became residents *of* (and that you can count as Americans); Brazilians...fsss! Whatever you want. A few Israelis...

With the Irish thing, here's an example – let's say I didn't know you and you were visiting...eh...Madrid, and...eh... I was there. In Spain. And you overheard me, and I overheard you. You don't know me. What would you think? Yank. And I would say, "Oh, she's...a fellow countrywoman!" *(Laughs)* And then you would be...flipping out when I say, "Conas atá tú?" In Spain. An American just greeted me in Irish. Do you see what I mean? What's the common point? It's like that with the Jewish thing, but we only know it cos we've appeared in this ...we've decided to Facebook ourselves into a group of local Jews, or whatever! What is the tie that binds?

Man 3 fades.

A burst of "Halevai" by the Barry Sisters and the dybbuk gradually gets carried away by gleeful frolic.

Rabbi: *(Shouting over the music)* Keeping up? It's confusing isn't it? One minute you're a Buddhist *and* a Jew...*and* you can be an atheist at the same time! You can do *all* of the religious stuff, or *none* of the religious stuff and *still* call yourself Jew-*ish*. You can even eat pork if you really, really have to...

Unearthing a backpack from the ground, the dybbuk puts it on – Man 2. He is fresh-faced for eighty-something and is walking a great distance.

Chapter Three – Ham Sandwiches in the Snow

Man 2: My grandfather was very, very religious; my father was...religious. He wouldn't do things on Sabbath that...you're not supposed to do. Eh, as children we didn't care but because my grandfather was so religious so there were certain thing we were not allowed to do during this – you know, you had to sit; you couldn't run, or write, or things like that. I remember, for example, when we went to school, especially in Winter, you-you had to eat food to wa- warm you up. So they used to do sandwiches with ham and, and with the fat – what you call it, eh...spek, yeah, you know. And so we go out of the house to go to school. So we said goodbye to my grandmother and grandfather, and we're going off, I kiss my grandmother going to school. Then went around the house and my mother, through the window, she would throw us the ham sandwiches because we are afraid, grandmother would say, "What have you got in the thing for...for...eh, breaks, you know, to eat?" So if the sandwiches were there with the ham it would have been a mortal sin! So we went around and then she would throw us the

sandwich through...And it was my mother, and my mother looked at it from the point of eh...you know, you need to have the spek and everything because it's snow outside, it's very cold. At the time you had to eat the fat and chicken fat and thing like that to, to keep you –

That fact that we ate, I eat ham sandwiches because it's important to get a strength you know? So it's eh, ham is a pure meat, it's not fat so it's good for me. But we wouldn't have sausages, pork sausages, in the fridge or anything like this. But in hotel – the first thing it's the Irish Breakfast I have, you know. Bacon, and eggs, and sausages! But I wouldn't have at home...but when we are in hotel I'm looking forward to the breakfast – bacon, egg, and sausages! There is some, some hypocrisy in the whole thing... ***(Laughs)***

Slowing down to a stop.

That's one of those things that I have from the concentration camp, you know? That when I go to a hotel and pe- you know, you know in hotel you have a canteen to take your breakfast, and they pile up the plate, and put – I don't know, half a dozen cakes on it because it's there – and then they leave three of the cakes and thing – it's, it just drives me...it's, it's eh...and the same thing with my brother because this is left something from the concentration camp and we were hungry. To throw food away makes me –

You know, people ask me many time after all what happened, you know, do you believe in God...?

Man 2 fades. Beat.

The bells of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre ring out in violent exclamation. Jerusalem.

Rabbi: God...The city of God...Tell us about your experience here in Jerusalem, can you?

Vignette – Jerusalem Syndrome

Dybbuk becomes Earl, a fictional American tourist:

Well, I was on the balcony of my room at the Ramada Inn here in town when the Lord spoke to me. It's the truth. Hallelujah! *Ya see Jerusalem, is... a place of hills and great carving, etched right out of the earth; layers of trees, of dirt and houses. A great bridge is being built for trains connecting two faraway hills. Dust rising. Fig trees ripening. Replica tanks going by. A constant feeling within me that something will happen. Here...*

One century after God is proclaimed dead the merchants once expelled from his temple hang around outside, united in their sales of menorahs, crucifixes, crescent moons and novelty Kippehs – Minions, Real Madrid logos, Superman emblems with Hasidic curls - "SuperJew".

The next part is spoken over the bells again, louder than ever.

You'll have to excuse me, but there are pains blossoming in my head. Headaches that bulge, pushing against the inside of the skull waiting to sprout. Somebody has taken an image of everything in front of me and smeared it sideways, 5 degrees southwest. The city is no longer the buildings around me. The buildings are an extension of me, and when I move they move too.

This is where Solomon split the cheque while his guests argued over who should pay for the pizza. This is where David slayed Goliath in a game of Pinball, and this is where Mohammed purchased booze and a packet of smokes too for good measure, which were totally for his Dad.

Hallelujah, praise the Lord! Shalem! Shalom! Yerushalayim! Jerusalem!

The dybbuk collapses. Silence.

Rabbi: Wow. That was really good. I could see the dust, and smell the figs, and the...the whatnot.... Jerusalem Syndrome - it's a real thing. Look it up...

Pause.

Right, NEXT!

An inhalation and the dybbuk hums the tune of "The Jewman", working up to a hearty rendition. Over the course of the song the dybbuk erects a clothed table and cakes, delf and a tea-pot from the earth.

The Jewman

At the top of town Anne Street a lady does well
Her name I won't mention. I dare not tell.
One cold winter's morning the Jewman did call
And unslung his bag outside of the hall.

He knocked at the door with his usual grin

Saying good morning, missus, is your husband within.

Says she no he's not I want nothing today

Ah take something said the Jewman don't send me away.

I have here some fine blankets the best of good wool

One shilling a week you know that's the rule

She then took the blankets saying no cash today

So come 'round next Monday and two shillings I'll pay

Oh two shillings, two shillings the Jewman did cry

A fine pair of blankets from me you did buy

Do you think me one eejit, one miserable fool

If I don't get my money I must get my wool.

Chapter Four – PredJEWdice

The dybbuk takes a pair of glasses on a chain and a fur gilet from the tree and puts them on – Woman 3, a 60-something Irish Yidische Mamma type. Very polite and stylishly dressed; loving, caring.

Woman 3: I think it's a terrific blessing to be an Irish-Jewish person. I mean I'm Irish first, my religion is Jewish but as I always say, I'm Irish-Jewish....Because...all over the world you meet Jewish people; all over the world you meet Irish people. And there is something – I could tell an Irish person without them opening their mouth, and I, like that, I could tell a Jewish person without them opening their mouth...

I was born in Cork of eh, parentage from Dublin whose, whose own parentage, em, my mother's grandfather and grandmother came from Russia - what is known as "white Russia" – they left from Riga. My great grandfather left first. He left his wife and there was six children, my grandmother being the eldest; and he came on board a ship thinking he was going to America, which was quite often the way. And Cork was a huge em, a huge port, you know and...Like other people, like most of the community he was told this was America and he got off the ship. In Cork! Anyway, he eventually settled in Dublin, he settled and, I don't know very much about it but I do know that they settled in the South Circular Road, which was the community at the time.

Did I feel different? I did get a few odd remarks now and then. It wasn't that they disliked me, they just didn't – like one woman said, "oh well, in Germany they had to get rid of the Jews, weren't they running the, the finances there?"

I had a boss who once said to me, he only said one or two things but they were very pointed, eh, he said to me "Why is it all *your people* go away?" This is a man who had six children. You know, "they get the best of Ireland and then they go away." And this was a man who, five of his kids at the time had gone through university and were living abroad! *(Laughs)* So that was one...

And then another time I had a problem because it was discovered that I was overpaying my tax. So I had to inform the office in my work...and my boss said, "What's all this from Isaacson-Greene Accountants?" I said, "I don't know what you're inferring but my accountant is Christian." Just like that, you know, he heard the name Isaacson-Greene and he's thinking, "Jewish accountants'. I just got it immediately and I was cutting him dead on the spot, even if he was to fire me for what I had said. And he never said another pointed thing to me after that.

Well what would you make of it? And how would you react? Hmmm?

Woman 3 fades as the dybbuk sings the last verse of The Jewman song –

Oh the magistrate eyed them with a judicial look
He called on the Bobby who then took the book
Saying your Worship yesterday at a quarter to one
Outside this woman's door I saw a great throng
On looking in the window at the woman and man
They were fighting like Devil's she was walloping him with a can
Said the Jew oh your Worship my poor head is sore
And I'll never go look for me wool anymore.

A change –

Rabbi: ***(sounding a bit Oirish)*** Wool, wool, wool, wool, woollll...Ah yes, Limerick city! January, nineteen hundred and four. An unpleasant business altogether. You know what I'm talking about don't you?

Dybbuk: There was a pogrom...

Rabbi: Yes, yes there was a so-called "pogrom" by the Paddys against the Jews of the city – so-called because no one actually died and there really wasn't any bloodshed worth talking about. Not like the real thing in Russia – nasty schtuff altogether. No, the Limerick episode played out as a boycott of all Jewish owned businesses, goods and services, and had the desired effect of running the small minority population out of the city and away from the good, God-fearing Catholics of Pigtown who were only going about their own schmall biteen in their own little way.

The man responsible for this declaration of the prohibition – one 32 year-old Fr. John Creagh, director of the arch-confraternity; described locally as, "an athletic, clean-built figure of a man, with the characteristic cheerfulness and frankness of a son of the soil."

Suddenly with a sweep of its arm, the dybbuk scatters all the delf and cakes off the table.

Vignette – Pigtown

The dybbuk dons the tablecloth as vestments. Then spitting and smiting from the pulpit amidst a shaft of church light –

Fr. Creagh: "The Jews were once the chosen people of God. His mercy and favours toward them were boundless. They were the people of whom was born the Messiah, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Master. But they rejected Jesus, they crucified Him – they called down the curse of His precious blood upon their own heads –"His blood be upon us and upon our children", they cried, and that curse came upon them.

Twenty years ago and less Jews were known only by name and evil repute in Limerick. They were sucking the blood of other nations, but those nations rose up and turned them out and they came to our land to fasten themselves on us like leeches, and to draw our blood when they had been forced away from other countries. They go about as peddlers from door to door, pretending to offer articles at very cheap prices, but charging several times the value more than they were bought in the shops. The Jew has got a sweet tongue when he wishes – he passes off his miserable goods upon the housewife. She has to spare and stint to

get the money to pay off the Jew without her husband knowing it, and then follow misery, sorrow and deceit. They have made Limerick their headquarters, from which they can spread their rapacious net over the country all round.

I do not hesitate to say that there are no greater enemies of the Catholic Church than the Jews. "

Another change – perhaps prison bars on the dybbuk.

Rabbi: ***(as the Sargent)*** "28th day of March, nineteen hundred and four. Witness statement from one Miss Norah Keefe, dairymaid (?), Shangolden, Foynes, Co. Limerick. Now Miss Keefe, can you give me your own account of the events of last Tuesday as previously described?

The dybbuk pulls the sheet up around her head as a shawl and becomes Norah.

Norah Keefe: Well Sargent, your honor sir –

Rabbi: Sargent McEvoy will suffice -

Norah Keefe: Well Sargent McEvoy, your honor sir, on the day in question I had gone to purchase some woolen blankets from Sandler the Pedlar. Tuesday morning does be his weekly visit to Shangolden, ya see. So there I was, delighted with myself and my two new blankets, when who should drive up on his cart only Fr. James Gleeson, pp. And without so much as a bye nor leave to me, he asked the Jewman Sandler what he had sold me, to which the peddler replied "a little, not much". I thought that was great, " a little, not much'!

Rabbi: Stick to the facts please, Miss Keefe.

Norah Keefe: Ahem. At which point my companion, Norah Harrington, ran (like the big sheevra she is) into a nearby outhouse to hide, for she knew 'twas all about to kick off with the pp any minute, and her not wanting to be implicated. Then he turns to me and he says, "Norah Keefe, I will get you out of the parish for dealing with the Jews, and be sure you'll be gone out of it before a week! Give out those blankets which you have bought from him at once." Then he approached the door of peddler's cart and told the Jew to clear off the road . "This is my parish", says he, "clear out of it!" an' he all red in the face, to which the Jew replied, "I care not for you or your parish." Ha! The go feic of him, giving guff to the pp like that.

Rabbi: Miss Keefe...

Norah Keefe: Well, Sargent McEvoy your Honor sir, tis like this. I resent Fr. Gleeson's interference in making me give back my two new blankets to the Pedlar Sandler. Sure I'm only a poor herdsman's daughter –a good many of my class would be in a bad way for clothing and bed covering come the winter only for the Jews...a wicked bad way altogether.

The sheet falls to the ground as Norah Keefe dissolves.

Chapter Five - Alien Overlords

The dybbuk approaches the trunk of the tree and pulls from it a beautiful creamy pint of Beamish and possibly a laptop – Man 1,

a twenty-something hipster, goofy and thoughtful but open to the world.

Man 1: My mum was raised in in a Catholic background and my dad was raised in a Jewish background, and that bubbles up in ways culturally I think. Like we don't eat kosher, cos you can't have pork and you can't combine meat and dairy. But like, for example, like, my dad will make a ham and cheese sandwich and make the joke that it's double negatives, so he's good to go. I don't do anything particularly Jewish during the day but like, at night I'm a super Rabbi...

Rabbi: Hang on! What about the Italian? And the aliens?

Vignette - Plurality

A clink of glasses is heard. A wine bar an Italian Tinder date –

Tinder guy: Well, this iz very nice. Yez, as I was saying I have my Masters Degree in Microfibretelecomssoftwaredataprofilingandmainframescript-engineering. Eh in my free time, I likeh de cooking very much. But, I'm really more interested in Teologia – culture of the world and these things. You know the Jews? Take for example the Hewbrew word "Elohim" – God. Well, Elohim is noteh singular. It's plural. So. That is the theory. That the Jews are in fact alien overloads!

You see, "Elohim" means "them" - an alien tribe from a planet in another galaxy fareh, far away who landed on earth millionz of years ago. They are de shape-shifters and eventually these shape-shifters became the 12 Tribes of

Israel! So now this is why the Jews they control everything – the banks, the companies, the tv, the art-eh, the food-eh. Everything! They are the extra-terrestrial master race. Cheerz!

A clink of glasses. The vignette fades. Man 1 again -

Man 1: To be honest, I just try and control money because it's money!

You know what I think. I think that Italian guy, in like, a weird way was really smart. Like think about it right – when you're here and you're like "eject, eject, eject", maybe he's like, "yeah, I believe in weird things but I don't wanna go out with somebody who doesn't believe in these thing too, ya know? I don't wanna waste my time, like find out 'til the fourth or fifth date that she doesn't believe that George Bush is a lizard person from Galactacon, I wanna find this shit out now. Because if she is some "normal theorist" who thinks that people are just bad people and not lizard people, Zionistic Jewish lizard people, I want none of that....

I'm half alien anyway, like Superman. Now I've got some time to kill. Are you gonna join me for a pint?

Man 1 fades.

Chapter Six – *Musselmanner*

A tight spotlight on the dybbuk. A ticking clock in the distance.

Rabbi: (From *Moni* by Ka-Tzetnik 135633-) *A human being. There he stands.*

W2: So, I'm third generation from the Holocaust.

Rabbi: *Bearing his life on his left arm, now.*

W2: You always meet people who lost their whole family. You're always around that.

Rabbi: *His life and he – shivering, naked.*

W2: I guess it's very alive, you know? I kind of say, you drink it with your milk.

Rabbi: *So much sky pouring in through the gap of the wide-open gate. So much light in the grooves between the skeletal ribs. So much light between his two legs. The light of day is upon everything.*

W2: It's like they say, "the Holocaust happened and it can happen again."

Rabbi: *His life is ashamed to face him, and his heart twinges with the pity of it all, but he has no solace to offer.*

W2: "They're out to kill us, you know, they're out to get us. We can't trust anyone."

Rabbi: *Naked skeletons.*

W2: "Look, it happened. They killed us."

Rabbi: *No telling one from the other.*

W2: And the stories are passed on of course, like they should be passed on and remembered.

Rabbi: *One by one the skeletons made their appearance – pallid, nude. Their naked steps were inaudible…."*

W2: But the victim feeling is like part of that. It's practiced.

Rabbi: *Skeletons. Skeletons.*

W2: For me that's a very dangerous mindset.

Rabbi: *You do not see them. Just as you do not see the paper, but the words written on it.*

The clock stops. Beat.

W2: How did it happen? Where is that moment when people obeyed?

Chapter Seven – Casting Out

The dybbuk sleeps on top of the tree, fitfully, muttering throughout -

Dybbuk: *I beheld a good dream – a good dream I beheld.*

Voices bleed in and out of each other.

- Identity is complex and fluid thing - 'Jewishness' or 'Irishness' would be understood differently by each individual...I don't eat cholent and go around spouting Jewish proverbs!

- The problems in Israel and Palestine region are not because of Israel alone, and because of Jews alone and because of Palestinians. It's a constant ongoing conflict...

- I think that the only way that there will ever be peace is em, when there is a sufficient space give to valuing multiple narratives, and sharing a space.

Rabbi: He will save you from the snare that traps from the devastating pestilence...

- The hostility I think is tied to the people in the boycott/divest, em, the BDS movement and that's that whole connection to…

- And so then, in the name of all those things, people are doing horrible things, to their neighbours, and there's a lot or racism...

- I'm really disgusted by the right wing and I'm disgusted by the right-wing settlers but it's not a black and white issue.

- We grew up with a lot of pride and I totally believed these stories about Israel, but then slowly by slowly over the last ten years I realised that under those stories there's so many other stories.

- No one told us about the Arabs that used to live in the places that we live. The Palestine tragedy.

- I don't...I don't know enough

- The story that I grew up with is this American miracle, we always thought Israel is this miracle of a nation...

- I think them getting to know me challenged a lot of their boycotting, you know...

Rabbi: He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge...

- Fear issues, and they're post-traumatic...not able to forgive and to...to have compassion...

- There's so many things I just, I disagree.

- I think that Israel had to exist for Judaism and for the world and that it's been a really rotten ride for Palestinians.

- We're not against the Jews, we're against Zionists.

- If you want to achieve any kind of authenticity in your work you need to move away from yet another superficial representation of the community.

- I'm not the stranger here.

- And if I brought like, Turkish coffee from Israel he wouldn't drink it. But after a while he was like, "fuck it!"

- It's like a different world; I have no connection with them...

- "You're a good Israeli, do you want to talk about it?"

Rabbi: You will not fear the terror of the night; the arrow that flies by day. Pestilence that prowls in darkness, destruction that ravages at noon.

The tree catches fire and the blaze intensifies.

- "Be careful or I'll punish you."

- "I'm not anti-semitic but I'm just saying there's a lot of Jewish people in positions of power..."

- Morality is one of the things we really believed in. But now I see that all those values, although they are still there, are slowly by slowly being demolished.

- My identity is not based on being Israeli, or being Jewish. Maybe being an immigrant...

- ...people who I feel and from any political perspective em, don't really want to talk and negotiate and have conflict resolution, but are stuck...and there's a lot of hatred ...

- Criticising Israel does not mean I'm pro-Palestinian. I'm pro-peace.

Rabbi: You will but gaze with your eyes, and you will see the annihilation of the wicked.

- I would love to see an international Jerusalem, em shared by all faiths, by all people and em, non-violence, a non-violent approach.

- It's like God is this terrible dangerous force and it's like, "fuck that."

Rabbi: A thousand will be stationed at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it will not approach you!

The flames swell around the dybbuk, who lets out a blood-curdling wail.

Blackout.

The dybbuk strikes a match and begins to light the branches of the tree making a sort of Menorah. She sings as she goes –

Arum dem fayer	*Around the campfire*
Mir zingen lider	*We sing songs*

Di nakht iz tayer	*The night is sweet*
Me vert nit mider	*We don't get tired*
Un zol der fayer	*And if the fire*
Farloshn vern	*Goes out*
Shaynt oyf der himl	*The heavens shine*
Mit zayne shtern	*With their stars*
To kroynt di kep	*So crown our heads*
Mit blumen-kranstn	*With flower garlands*
Arum dem fayer	*Around the fire*
Mirn freylekh tantsn	*We'll dance happily*
Vayl tants un lider	*Since dance and songs*
Iz undzer lebn	*Are our life*
Dernokh in shlof	*And then in sleep*
Khaloymes shvebn	*We spin dreams*

Chapter Nine – Echoes

Woman 4:

I can't stand it! I wish I wasn't Jewish! *(Laughs)* It's too complicated. It's so complicated! Also it's really interesting and it's amazing when I talk to-you know and I say, I'm doing this research and the responses are fantastic – everybody's thoroughly interested and supportive and it's a fab journey. But I'm also a bit scared. I'm scared of being attacked I think. You know, either just verbally or... I mean sometimes I just think, well what if I present my play eventually and somebody decides they don't like Jews or they don't like Israel and decides to attack me...

One of the reasons my writing has stopped is because I feel, how can I, an outsider, write about the community here...how can I have the cheek and the temerity to like, you know, write about, em, something that I wasn't part of! And I want to get to the point with myself where I don't feel like I have cheek. I want to feel like, yes! It's absolutely fine to write about something that you're not part of, it's what people do all the time. And on some level we are part of it because we're writing the thing, because we have an interest and we feel connected.

I feel like this is my life's work now, the next bit of the life or whatever, it does feel like I've set on some- it has so many branches I couldn't just stop it and write something about something else...

They say that people who wander always go home in the end. So what about me... I suppose the going home in the end is maybe the writing about Jewish stuff. Maybe that's the going home, cos there is no home other than Ireland probably.

So maybe that's what I'm learning - I'm not only this. I'm something else and I want to know who I am.

At last, an exhalation from the dybbuk.

The Rabbi reads a passage from the "Heart and the Spring" by Rabbi Nachman. During this reading the dybbuk makes a collection of the interviewee's things.

"And there is a Mountain, and on the Mountain stands a Stone, and from the Stone emerges a Spring.

Now, every thing has a heart, and the entire world also has a heart, and the Heart of the World is a complete structure, with face, hands, feet, etc. — but the nail of the foot of the

World's Heart is heartier than the heart of anything else.

And the Mountain with the Stone and the

Spring stands at one end of the world, while this

Heart of the World stands at another end of the world, and the Heart stands facing the Spring,

desiring and hoping continuously, exceedingly, that it should come to the Spring,

and the longing and desire of the Heart to come to the Spring is just extraordinary.

The Rabbi's voice fades.

It screams nonstop, the Heart, to come to the Source, and the Source longs for the Heart too..."

Researcher (undressing, revealing everyday clothes): "Now I will tell you about culture. Culture is [a] garden. It is not a thing of nations. It is not about Goethe and *yeshivas*. It is children playing. Culture is the simple grass through which the wind blows sweetly and each grass blade bends softly to the caress of the wind. It is like a mother who would pick up her child and kiss it, with the tenderness that gave birth to it. We don't see this anymore. In the present time we see nations. They are not natural outgrowings. Their roots are too harsh. They grew up too fast."

Suddenly, an intense ray of sunlight.

Do you want to move to the sun and get the last bit of it?

Pause.

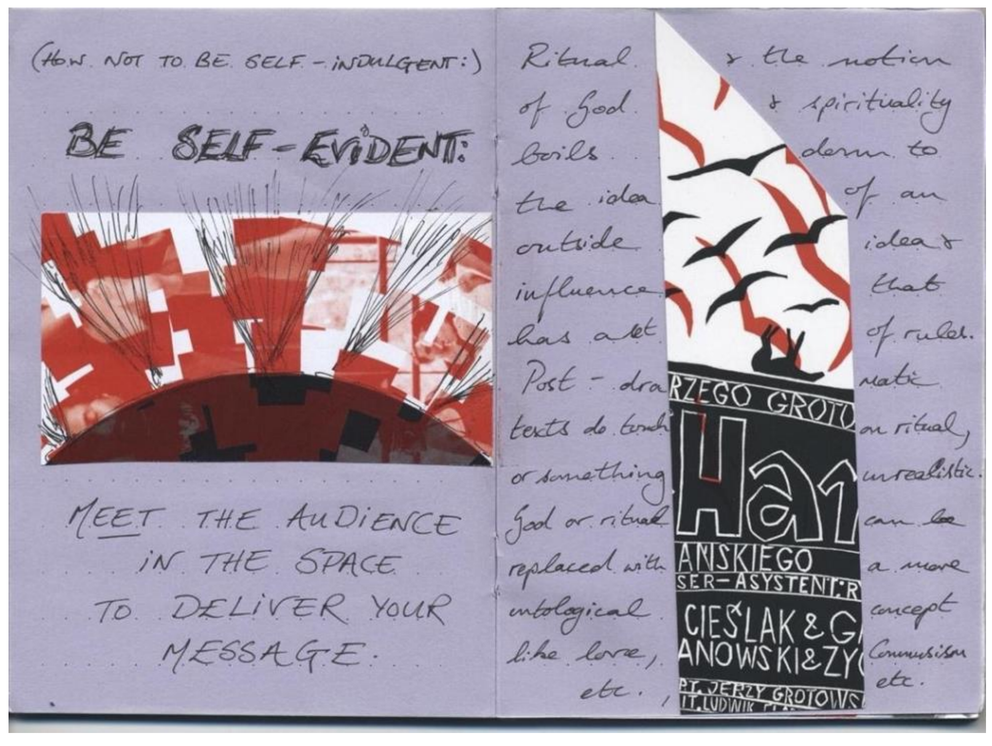
Let's do it.

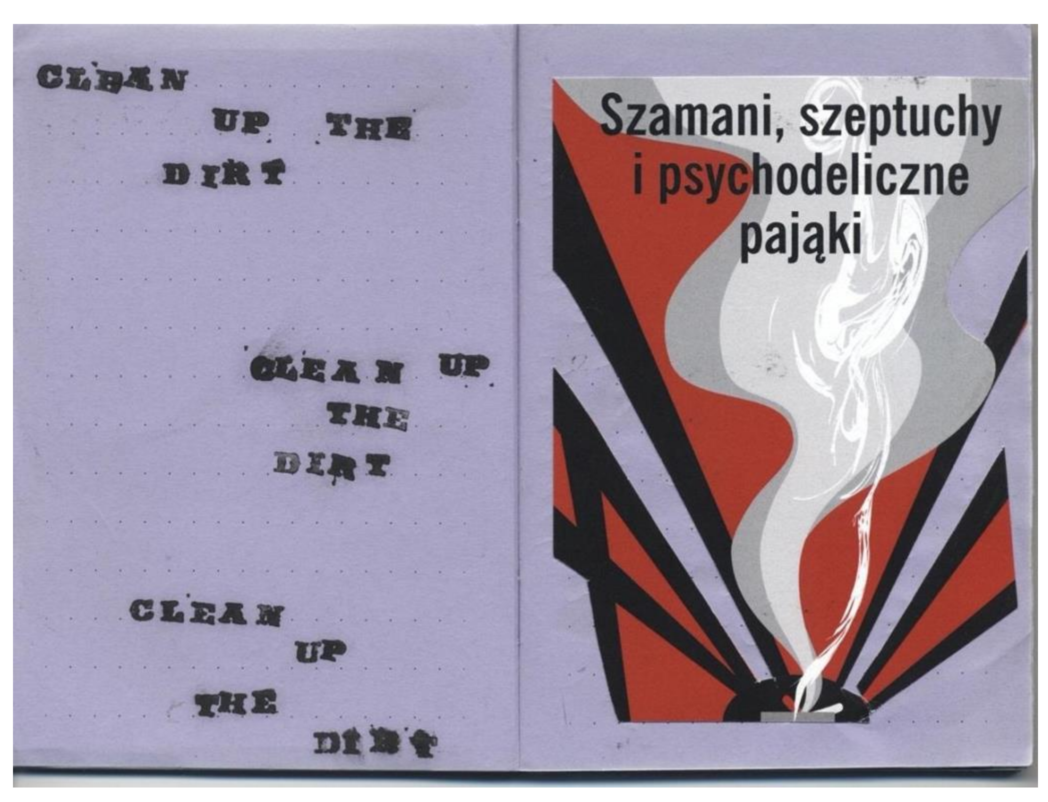
Blackout.

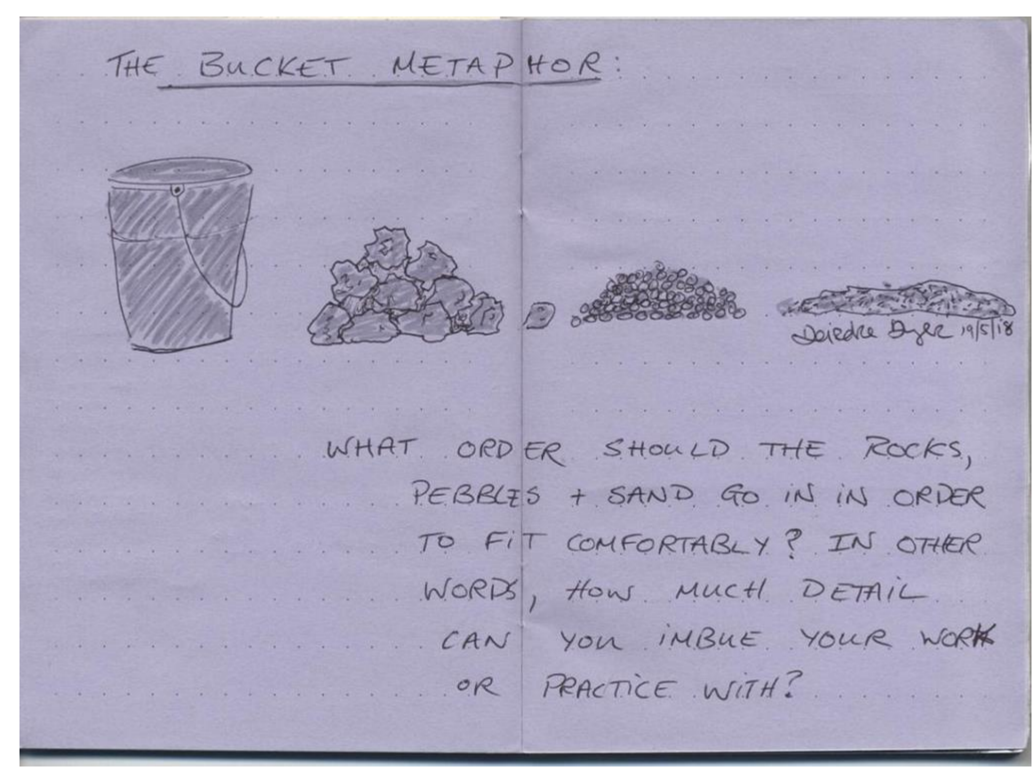
Appendix D: Poster and Programme

Appendix E: Notes from the Grotowski Institute

Wrocław, Poland, May 2018.




CLEAN UP THE DIRT
CLEAN UP THE DIRT
CLEAN UP THE DIRT
Szamani, szeptuchy i psychodeliczne pająki


THE BUCKET METAPHOR:
Deirdre Dyer 19/5/18
WHAT ORDER SHOULD THE ROCKS, PEBBLES + SAND GO IN IN ORDER TO FIT COMFORTABLY? IN OTHER WORDS, HOW MUCH DETAIL CAN YOU IMBUE YOUR WORK OR PRACTICE WITH?

Appendix F: Music to accompany this thesis.

Compilation playlist of the soundtrack of original music by SubRelic, music used in the performance of HSWR, and other tracks that provided inspiration and escape:

https://www.mixcloud.com/SubRelic/here-shall-we-rest-listen-mix-curated-by-aideen-wylde-and-subrelic/